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REVIEW

OF

Men and Manners

IN

AMERICA.

A
REVIEW
OF
MEN AND MANNERS
IN
AMERICA,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CYRIL THORNTON."

Hamilton, Thomas

REPRINTED FROM THE
NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

LONDON:
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1834.

MEN AND MANNERS IN AMERICA.

IN our last number, we noticed at some length the observations of the Rev. Isaac Fidler upon the state of society and literature in this country. Some of our contemporaries have expressed the opinion, that we gave to that work an importance disproportionate to its value. It should be recollected, however, that in order to convey to the public a correct notion of the spirit of the British press, in relation to the United States, the works most suitable for notice are precisely the best and the worst; on the one hand, those which, from the ability and information displayed in them, may really be thought to require refutation, and on the other, those in which the prejudices common to most British travellers are exhibited in their naked proportions, without any accidental advantages of style or general learning, and of course in the form most open to detection and exposure.

Mr. Fidler's work is a brilliant specimen of the latter class, and has a fair chance of retaining, through all succeeding ages, the distinction of being the most absurd book of travels that was ever written,—at least by a clergyman of 'more than ordinary acquirements.' The work before us belongs to the other category, and may, perhaps, be considered in respect of literary execution and general ability as the best British account of this country that has yet been published. The work of Captain Hall is the only one that can come in these respects into competition with it,—and the two are in fact so nearly alike, both in spirit and execution, that it would be hardly worth while to attempt to settle their comparative merits. The work before us is described in the title page as written by the author of Cyril Thornton, a

novel which is also anonymous, but is known to be the production of a Mr. Hamilton of Edinburgh. This person is, we believe, an officer of the army, living in retirement upon half-pay, of what rank we are unable to say with certainty, the newspapers having complimented him successively with various titles, such as Colonel, Major, Captain, and Lieutenant, some one of which is probably the true one. His Cyril Thornton, though of no great value as a novel, exhibits a good deal of literary ability, and would justify us in expecting from its author a work of a pretty high order upon a subject like that of the one before us, to which we think his talent better adapted than for fictitious writing.

This expectation will not be entirely disappointed, nor yet very fully satisfied by the character of the present work. It is undoubtedly, as we have said, in point of literary execution, one of the best that have yet appeared upon the United States. The style is not deficient in strength or spirit, and evinces at times a remarkable power of description, as in the passages on the Falls of Niagara and the river Mississippi. On the other hand, it is far from being uniformly so pure and correct as might be wished,—is often unpardonably coarse, and is pervaded throughout by an affected pertness, and a silly air of pretension, which are offensive from the beginning, and finally become by repetition completely nauseous.

We shall have occasion, in making extracts for other purposes, to give some specimen of these defects in style: and will merely add here, that one of the most remarkable transgressions against the purity of the language occurs in the very passage, in which the learned author is taking the Americans to task for their manifold and flagrant offences in this particular. At the close of his chapter on Boston, he introduces a page or two of observations upon barbarisms in language with the following sentence. ‘Even by the educated and respectable class, the commonest words are often so *transmogrified* as to be placed beyond the recognition of an Englishman.’ *Transmogrified!!!* and this too from the pen of a purist, and in the very sentence in which he is condemning a supposed want of purity in the use of language by others. Truly has it been said, that Nemesis is always on the watch. After this auspicious commencement, our author runs over the usual enumeration of *clever*, *guess*,

and the use of *progress* as a verb, and having denounced, in addition to these stock examples, two or three other supposed American barbarisms, all of which may be found recorded in the British provincial glossaries, and are more frequently used in the mother country than they are here, jumps at the following astounding conclusion; 'unless the present progress of change be arrested by an increase of taste and judgment in the more (*better*) educated classes, there can be no doubt that in another century the dialect of the Americans will become utterly unintelligible to an Englishman, and that the nation will be cut off from the advantages arising from their participation in British literature.'

Within the limited compass of our reading, we hardly recollect an example of a conclusion, that stands at so utterly hopeless a distance from its premises. Our readers, who have ears and nerves, will, we think, agree with us that the 'word of fear' which we have quoted above from our author's pages, and which, that we may have the full benefit of the invention, is repeated elsewhere, and followed out into the not less delightful derivative noun,—*transmogrification*,—constitutes of itself a grosser offence against the purity of the language,—we will not say than all the minor peccadillos which he has mustered up against us put together, because these really amount to nothing,—but than the sum total of all the errors of this kind that came under his observation, in tolerably good company, in the course of his travels from Boston to New Orleans.

So much for the mere matter of style, which, with the deductions we have mentioned, is in the main good. Of the spirit in which the work is written,—a far more important consideration,—we are compelled to speak in less favourable terms. As friends of the two countries, anxiously desiring, not merely the continuance of the present political good understanding, but the establishment of,—what has never yet existed,—a really kind and cordial feeling between them, we deeply regret that the ablest and best-written work upon this country which has yet appeared from the pen of a British traveller, is also the one which exhibits in the most inveterate and malignant form the common prejudices of the class. The causes that have led to this unfortunate result, it is of course not for us,—imperfectly acquainted as we are with the author's history,—to pretend to

investigate. He seems himself to have anticipated the objection which we make to the temper of his book, and in a short apologetic preface, in the form of a dedication, attempts to parry it in the following manner.

‘How far, in writing of the institutions of a foreign country I may have been influenced by the prejudices natural to an Englishman, I presume not to determine. To the impartiality of a cosmopolite I make no pretension. No man can wholly cast off the trammels of habit and education, nor (*or*) escape from the bias of that multitude of minute and latent predilections, which insensibly affect the judgment of the wisest.

‘But apart from such necessary and acknowledged influences, I am aware of no prejudice, which could lead me to form a perverted estimate of the condition, moral or social, of the Americans. I visited their country with no antipathies to be overcome; and I doubt not you can bear testimony, that my political sentiments were not such, as to make it probable, that I would regard with an unfavourable eye the popular character of their government. In the United States I was received with kindness, and enjoyed an intercourse, at once gratifying and instructive with many individuals for whom I can never cease to cherish the warmest sentiments of esteem. I neither left England a visionary and discontented enthusiast, nor did I return to it a man of blighted prospects and disappointed hopes. In the business or ambitions of the world I had long ceased to have any share. I was bound to no party, and pledged to no opinions. I had visited many countries, and may, therefore, be permitted to claim the possession of such advantages as foreign travel can bestow.

‘Under these circumstances, I leave it to the ingenuity of others to discover by what probable, what possible temptation I could be induced to write in a spirit of unjust depreciation of the manners, morals or institutions of a people, so intimately connected with England by the ties of interest and the affinities of common ancestry.’

That a spirit of unjust depreciation is the one that predominates in his work, is,—as we shall have occasion abundantly to show,—very certain. Why this is so, it is, we repeat, not for us to say, but the author has, we think, answered the question in a very satisfactory manner, in the passage immediately preceding the one just quoted.

‘When I found the institutions and experience of the United States deliberately quoted in the Reformed Parliament, as affording safe precedents for British legislation, and learned that

the drivellers who uttered such nonsense, instead of encountering merited derision, were listened to with patience and approbation by men as ignorant as themselves, I certainly did feel that another work on America was yet wanted, and at once determined to undertake a task, which inferior considerations would probably have induced me to decline.'

The amount of this is, that the object of the author, in writing his work, was to furnish his countrymen with a reply to the argument in favour of reform, deduced from the supposed successful operation of democratic principles in this country. After making this perfectly candid statement, it strikes us that he need not have been so much at a loss to imagine what temptation he could possibly have had to an unjust estimate of our institutions and character. That a person, writing with an avowed political purpose, will, to a certain extent, so color his representations, as may best fit them to effect this purpose, is not perhaps absolutely certain; but the case is undoubtedly a very common one,—so common, indeed, that no individual, however correct his general intentions may be, ought to hesitate a moment in admitting the possibility of its occurrence in his own person. Every impartial and discerning reader must perceive, on the slightest inspection of the work before us, that it did in fact occur in the present instance; that the disposition under which the author made his observations, and of course to a certain extent the character of their results, were determined by his political objects; and that his book, instead of being a real account of Men and Manners in America, as it purports to be, is in substance nothing more than a long *tirade* against *the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill*.

A considerable portion of the work is in the form of a direct commentary on the political institutions of the United States, and is of course entitled to all the consideration which the arguments alleged against them may fairly deserve. In another and a more extensive portion, the author aims less directly at his mark, and endeavours to prove that the Government is bad, by showing that the people are occasionally deficient in polish and elegance of manner. Now supposing this point to be made out, we cannot think that the conclusion drawn by the worthy

traveller would necessarily follow. If it were admitted, for example, that the practice of chewing tobacco, with its natural concomitants, is too common among certain classes of the community, it would not be safe to draw from this fact the inference that the laws of the country are tyrannical, insufficient, or in any way objectionable, for the plain reason that the practice of chewing tobacco is not commanded by law, but is a mere matter of taste and habit.

Again: if the only proper and polite way of eating eggs be,—as our author supposes,—to convey the substance directly from the shell to the mouth, without the intervention of a wine-glass, a dish, or any other instrument except, perhaps, a spoon;—and on this point there are great authorities against him, for no less a personage than Baron Haussez, lately one of the ornaments of the French Court, and a *gastronome* of high distinction, considers it as great an abomination to eat eggs directly from the shell, as our author to do it in any other way, and makes it a matter of distinct reproach upon the English that they all adopt this practice:—but admitting that our author and those who with him and his countrymen eat from the shell are in the right, and that the Americans, the French, and other nations, who occasionally indulge themselves in an *omelette aux fines herbes*, a glass of mulled champagne or some preparation of the egg other than the *au naturel* are wrong,—and for ourselves we consider the whole controversy no more important than the quarrels of the Big and Little Endians in the empire of Lilliput,—still, however, if we were to grant all that our author can possibly desire in this particular, he could not with any fairness conclude that the Constitution of the United States is a bad form of Government, inasmuch as that instrument prescribes no rule whatever on the subject of eating eggs, but leaves the citizen entirely free to eat them from the shell,—a wine-glass,—in omelettes,—poached, or in any other way that he may think proper.

But without dwelling any longer on preliminary points, we proceed to notice more directly the results of this new tour of observation in the United States. In attempting to discharge this duty, we shall briefly indicate the track pursued by our author, and make some occasional commentaries on his personal

adventures, and on his statements respecting the character of the people and the principles and operation of the political institutions of the country.

Our author embarked at Liverpool, on the 16th of October 1831, on board the packet ship *New York*, Captain Bennet, and after a pleasant and rapid passage, reached New York on the 17th of the following month. His account of an adventure, in itself of no great moment, that happened to him on the very day of his arrival, will serve, as well as almost any other passage in the book, to illustrate the spirit in which it is written.

It had been arranged, it seems, among the passengers in the *New York*, that they should dine together at Niblo's tavern on the day of their arrival; and at the hour fixed, our author set forth from his lodgings, to repair to the scene of action. Finding it necessary, as he proceeded, to inquire his way, he stepped for this purpose into a shop, and asked the person in attendance, if he could give him the direction he wanted. The latter replied that 'he could, and would do it with pleasure,' which he accordingly did. Our author then went his way rejoicing, and reached his tavern in time to partake of the best dinner which he ate in America. Such is the adventure,—one would suppose that it was scarcely of sufficient importance to occupy a place in the traveller's published observations and that, if it did, it would hardly afford occasion for any unfavorable conclusion as to the character of the people. Let us now see the shape which it assumes under the pen of Mr. Hamilton.

'Before quitting the ship, it had been arranged among a considerable number of the passengers, that we should dine together on the day of our arrival, as a proof of parting in kindness and good-fellowship. Niblo's tavern, the most celebrated eating-house at New York, was the scene chosen for this amicable celebration. Though a little tired with my walks of the morning, which the long previous confinement on board of ship had rendered more than usually fatiguing, I determined to explore my way on foot, and having procured the necessary directions at the hotel, again set forth. On my way an incident occurred, which I merely mention to show how easily travellers like myself, on their first arrival in a country, may be led into a misconception of the character of the people. Having proceeded some distance, I found it necessary to inquire my way, and accordingly

entered a small grocer's shop. "Pray, Sir," I said, "can you point out to me the way to Niblo's tavern?"—The person thus addressed was rather a gruff-looking man, in a scratch wig, and for at least half a minute kept eyeing me from top to toe, without uttering a syllable. "Yes, Sir, I can," he at length replied, with a stare as broad as if he had taken me for the great Katterfelto. Considering this sort of treatment as the mere *ebullition of republican insolence*, I was in the act of turning on my heel, and quitting the shop, when the man added,—“and I shall have great pleasure in showing it to you.” He then crossed the counter, and accompanying me to the middle of the street, pointed out the land marks by which I was to steer, and gave me the most minute directions for my guidance. I presume that his curiosity in the first instance was excited by something foreign in my appearance; and that having once satisfied himself that I was a stranger, he became on that account more than ordinarily anxious to oblige. This incident afforded me the first practical insight into the manners of the people, and was useful both as a precedent for future guidance, and as explaining the source of many of the errors of subsequent travellers. Had my impulse to quit the shop been executed with greater rapidity, I should certainly have considered the man as a *brutal barbarian*, and perhaps have drawn an unfair inference with regard to the manners and character of the lower orders of society in the United States.’

Le vrai, says the French proverb, *n'est pas toujours vraisemblable*. If such an incident as this were found in one of Moliere's comedies, we should say that he had greatly overcharged his character. Our author steps into a grocer's shop to inquire his way; the grocer commences a very courteous answer of ten words, but before he has even time to finish it, the inquirer nearly rushes out of the shop in a transport of offended pride, because forsooth the proprietor thought fit to *look* rather intently at him. Our author doubtless thought, that when so great a personage made his *avatar* upon the shores of our continent, the natives, in coming into his august presence, would at the very least *knock head* in the Chinese fashion, if they did not actually grovel upon the ground before him, like the negro courtiers of Bornoo at the feet of their sultan. That a simple American grocer should not only fail in this, but should actually take the liberty of *looking* intently at a British captain,—or whatever his rank may be,—on half-pay, and he too the author of a rather popular novel, this to be sure was an *ebullition of republican*

insolence, which, had not the matter been speedily set right, would unquestionably have stamped the offender as a *brutal barbarian*, and *justified the most unfavorable inferences with regard to the character and manners of the lower orders of society in the United States*.

‘This incident,’ says our author, ‘afforded me the first practical insight into the manners of the people, and was useful as explaining the source of many of the errors of former travellers.’ Our readers will probably think, with us, that his account of the incident affords a pretty good insight into his own character, and explains very satisfactorily the source of many of his subsequent errors. We may remark, *en passant*, that the peculiarity of our author’s enunciation, which, from the loss of a part of his organs of speech in some of his youthful campaigns, is, we understand, hardly intelligible to a person unaccustomed to it, probably had its effect in calling forth the *look* that offended him so much, as well as the *something foreign in his appearance*, which, however,—if we are rightly informed,—was in fact, in point of costume, generally more than singular.

Our author, on his arrival at New York, took lodgings at Bunker’s Hotel, and the next morning assumed his place at the breakfast table with the other inmates of the house. The state of things at his entrance is described as follows:

‘I had nearly completed my toilet on the morning after my arrival, when the tinkling of a large bell gave intimation that the hour of breakfast was come. I accordingly descended as speedily as possible to the *salle a manger*, and found a considerable party engaged in doing justice to a meal, which at first glance one would scarcely have guessed to be a breakfast. Solid viands of all descriptions loaded the table, while, in the occasional intervals, were distributed dishes of rolls, toast, and cakes of buck-wheat and Indian corn. At the head of the table sate the landlady, who, with an air of complacent dignity, was busied in the distribution of tea and coffee. A large bevy of negroes was bustling about, ministering with all possible alacrity to the many wants, which were somewhat vociferously obtruded on their attention. Towards the upper end of the table I observed about a dozen ladies, but by far the largest part of the company were of the other sex.’

All this must, to a hungry man, have formed on the whole a rather promising *ensemble*, and one would naturally suppose that our traveller,—who frequently compliments himself upon

possessing the hearty and indiscriminating appetite of an old campaigner,—must have made a good breakfast. Most of the guests probably did so, and went their way without imagining that any thing extraordinary had happened. But to the refined sensibilities of our author, the affair was little more than a series of various abominations.

‘The contrast of the whole scene with that of an English breakfast table was striking enough. Here was no loitering nor lounging; no dipping into newspapers; no apparent lassitude of appetite; no interval of repose in mastication; but all was hurry, bustle, clamor and voracity, and the business of repletion went forward with a rapidity altogether unexampled. The strenuous efforts of the company were, of course, soon rewarded with success. Departures, which had begun, even before I took my place at the table, became every instant more numerous, and in a few minutes the apartment had become what Moore beautifully describes in one of his songs, a “banquet-hall deserted.” The appearance of the table, under such circumstances, was by no means gracious either to the eye or the fancy. It was strewed thickly with the *disjecta membra* of the entertainment. Here lay fragments of fish, somewhat unpleasantly odoriferous; there, the skeleton of a chicken; on the right a mustard-pot upset, and the cloth, *passim*, defiled with stains of eggs, coffee, gravy,—but I will not go on with the picture. ‘One *nasty* custom, however, I must notice. Eggs, instead of being eat (*eaten*) from the shell, are poured into a wine-glass, and after being duly and disgustingly churned up with butter and condiment, the mixture, according to its degree of fluidity, is forthwith either spooned into the mouth, or drunk off like a liquid. The advantage gained by this unpleasant process, I do not profess to be qualified to appreciate, but I can speak from experience to its sedative effect on the appetite of an unpractised beholder.’

In this case, the principal ground of complaint,—the *corpus delicti*,—seems to have been, that the breakfast-table did not look so fresh, and clean and perfect in all its arrangements at the close of the repast, as it did at the beginning. There were stains upon the cloth: and portions of the articles of food, which were partly eaten, remained upon the dishes. Truly, our author is a reasonable man. In Edinburgh, they doubtless manage these things very differently. There, a mustard-pot that is overturned leaves no spot behind it: the cloth and the napkins that have served the purpose of the meal are as smooth and as glossy as they were when they left the landlady’s press, and the bones of

the chickens and the fish, as fast as they are denuded to satisfy the appetites of the guests, put on spontaneously a new covering, and look as plump as though nothing had happened. In the same way it is not improbable, that within the precincts of our author's former experience, the linen appropriated to personal use remained as clean and sweet after two or three weeks' wearing, as when first put on: and this may partly account for the singular fact, that an individual, so peculiarly nice in all his habits, and so decidedly averse to 'nastiness' of any kind,—to use his own elegant phraseology,—should have paid so little attention to the occasional refreshment of his costume during his residence at Bunker's, that his fellow boarders, if we are rightly informed, actually held a formal meeting on the subject, at which they passed a resolution, requesting him to change his linen; and at length, finding his manners incorrigibly offensive, were compelled to abate him as a common nuisance, by requesting the master of the house to deliver them from his company.

At the egg question we have already glanced, and its importance is hardly such, as to justify our resuming it at much length. Our author regards it as entirely heterodox, to eat eggs in any other way than directly from the shell. Baron Haussez, on the other hand, denounces the practice of eating them from the shell, as the *ne plus ultra* of barbarism. Highly as we think of the civilization and refinement of the Athens of Great Britain, we are compelled to say, that, on a question of this kind, the authority of the minister of Charles X. is decidedly preferable to that of a Scotch lieutenant on half-pay.

As to the rapidity with which the breakfast was eaten,—and this is one of our author's great grievances,—the real difficulty in this particular case seems to have been that, overdone by the fatigues of the preceding day, perhaps by the pleasures of the parting feast at Niblo's, he had slept too late, and did not reach the table until the company had nearly finished. This circumstance accounts satisfactorily for the early disappearance of the other guests; and for the comparatively disordered state in which he appears to have found the arrangements of the repast. The same topic is, however, repeatedly adverted to on other occasions, which do not admit of the same explanation. Thus, in his account of the dinner at the hotel on the same day, our author states, that he 'beheld the same scene of *gulping* and

swallowing, as if for a wager, which his observation at breakfast had prepared him to expect. Each individual seemed to *pitch-fork* his food down his *gullet*, without the smallest attention to the wants of his neighbour.' In these remarks, the worthy captain,—if captain he be,—seems to have been a little less select in his choice of terms, than might have been wished, or,—considering the high standard of delicacy he employs in judging the conduct and language of others,—perhaps expected. But without dwelling upon these *minutiæ*, as a too great rapidity in despatching their meals has been for some years past a standing topic of reproach upon the Americans, by all the British travellers, and as the matter admits, we think, of an easy and simple explanation, we proceed to treat it very briefly on its merits.

We are of opinion, then, that the length of time devoted to the business of eating is every where determined by personal and accidental considerations, rather than by any peculiarities of national character. The French peasant, for example, who dines upon a piece of brown bread, seasoned perhaps with a morsel of cheese, or an onion, will spare himself the trouble even of sitting down to table, and may often be seen despatching his simple repast, with great *gout* and gaiety, in the open air at his cottage door. The substantial burgher of all countries, on the other hand, who fares more or less handsomely, if not sumptuously, every day, will probably devote something like an hour to his principal meal. Again; a party of friends, who meet together at the close of the day, in form to dine, but in fact to enjoy each other's conversation and company, will prolong the meeting for several hours; while the same party, on the other hand, with the same viands before them, if restricted in time by any accidental circumstance, will be compelled to abridge their conversation, and to devote themselves chiefly to the mere satisfaction of the wants of nature. Now the error into which the whole herd of British travellers, and our author *tout le premier*, have fallen in regard to this subject, proceeds, as we conceive, from their having overlooked the last of these incontestible truths. The conclusions of these gentlemen, respecting the state of society, manners and literature in the United States, are, as is well known, the results, in general, of observations made in taverns, steamboats, and stage coaches. That the

meals, which are eaten by the travellers in stage-coaches at the public tables in the taverns where they stop along the road, are commonly despatched with some rapidity, is no doubt true: but it is equally certain that there is a special reason for this, which does not operate with the same force upon the nation at large. When a stage-coach stops at a tavern, the company are allowed about half an hour,—perhaps forty minutes,—to breakfast or to dine; and as the time of arrival is uncertain, a quarter or a third part even of this brief space must elapse, before the dishes are placed upon the table. What then is to be done? Is the traveller to undertake to ‘loiter and lounge:’—to ‘dip into newspapers:’—to ‘allow himself an interval of repose in mastication?’ If he did, the coachman’s horn would sound before he had finished the first cup of coffee, or the first morsel of beef. Is he to refrain entirely from eating, rather than not take his meals with all the leisure of a British nobleman at his seat in the country? Neither appetite nor health would permit this course. What then, we repeat, is he to do? The answer is plain;—not ‘*gulp and swallow as if for a vager*:’—not ‘*pitchfork his food down his gullet*, without the least attention to the wants of his neighbour;’—for we do not admit that these coarse phrases give a correct notion of the manner of proceeding at any decent public table in this country, or of any thing except the want of good breeding in the writer that uses them: but—put formality in his pocket, and without dawdling over newspapers or stopping to discuss disputed points in theology or politics, seat himself at the table and make a moderate meal with all convenient despatch, that he may be ready to take his place in the coach, at the time appointed. This is what the traveller in stage-coaches is compelled to do, and what he really does, not merely in this country, but all the world over.

Such we suppose to be the secret of the extraordinary rapidity in the despatch of meals in this country, which has for several years past given so much uneasiness to the British travellers. On the occasion particularly alluded to by our author, the persons, whose early departure from the table annoyed him so much, had probably arrived fifteen minutes before in one coach, and were going away fifteen minutes after in another. That gentlemen, who meet in the way of dinner parties for conversation and society, are in any haste to separate, is so far

from being true, that the prevailing error, here as in England, is precisely the opposite one. In France, the practice is for the whole company to retire from the table together, on these occasions, at the close of the meal, which seldom occupies more than an hour and a half. Here, on the contrary, as in England, it is usual for the gentlemen to remain after the ladies have retired, and sit over their wine two or three hours in succession, not unfrequently till midnight. If this do not satisfy our author, we should recommend it to him to look well to his own ways, and join the Temperance Society as speedily as possible. For ourselves, if we were disposed to suggest to our countrymen any change in their habits in this particular, the counsel we should give them would certainly be not to prolong but to abridge their potations, and adjourn in better season than they now do to the drawing-room.

Without enlarging any farther upon this subject, we shall merely add, that the standard of decorum at the public dinner-tables in this country seems to be at least as high as in England,—if we may draw any general conclusions from the following account of the proceedings of the Liverpool Agricultural Society on a recent occasion of this description. We have been present at a considerable number of the public festivals of Agricultural and other Societies in this country, but have never happened to witness any ‘new surtouts split from the collar downwards,’—any ‘unauthorized visibility of white under vestures,’—‘any black print of a boot on the pure damask beside our plate,’—or any disposition in the guests to ‘peregrinate amongst decanters, glasses and plates’ upon the top of the tables: all which, and more, appear to have been among the interludes and *divertissemens* of the Liverpool dinner, and may, perhaps, have become general in the mother country.

‘The annual dinner was announced to be given in Lucas’s Repository, Great Charlotte street, at five o’clock; and considerably prior to that hour, the door was besieged by a company, of whom, as far as could be judged outwardly, it did not seem that a good dinner was the last thing to stand in fear. Before the opening of the door, the crowd increased much in numbers, and more in impatience, and when, at length, a small crevice was made, it agreed so little with their expectation of making a full sweep upon the viands when the large folding gates should have expanded for their simultaneous ingress, that out of re-

venge the crushing became only more violent and determined, till it might have been doubted whether the wrong party had not been brought out of the Infirmary yard to dine, and the visitors and candidates left behind. In vain the persons keeping the entrance cried out shame, and those who were nearly in, enforced upon the rear the uselessness of struggling, so long as all were sure of admission; the hunching, and elbowing, and complaining still continued, in a way which, it was very plain from the unequivocal expressions of some of the sufferers, will be certain of allowing more room at the door-way on a subsequent occasion. That the affair was egregiously mismanaged was expressed in very unceremonious terms, and if the right honorable chairman had found no other means of entering the room than by enduring the compressure of such an immense mass of human bodies, till it appeared sufficient to have flattened the two sides of his ribs together as easily as it would have flattened his hat, we think he would have excepted that part of the day's proceeding from the character of being 'an honor to the town of Liverpool.' We can only say, that however such a manipulating might be sustained before dinner, it would not have done after. Amidst all this suffering, it was not to be supposed that the minor evils of rent garments, and seams split open, would be wanting: accordingly, the wo-begone aspect of many a good piece of broad-cloth attested the desperate conflict it had passed through; people, however, were too glad to get in, although it might be in the garb of a magpie, through the *unauthorized visibility of their white under vestures*.

'It would certainly have taken something more than ordinarily accommodating tempers withinside, to have restored good humour, after all the spleen engendered at the entrance. The opinions on the entertainment ought, therefore, in justice to be received with that qualification. The dishes supplied were of the best kind, substantial, and in sufficient abundance, and the number of the guests, which amounted to between six and seven hundred, must also be taken into consideration. This, indeed, gave occasion for some especial congratulations from the head of the table, and no one can deny that there was a satisfaction in seeing the agricultural interest of the country in such a flourishing state, and so many of its friends rallying round the cause; but we speak of the dinner itself; and we do think, that if, when you have survived the perils and punishment of the passage in, you sit down, albeit with the *back of your new surtout split from the collar downwards*, resolving to console your stomach at the table for what you have suffered in your liver at the door, some subject, much more hungry than polite, runs across the table, leaving the *black print of his boot on the pure damask beside your plate*, or shaking the questionable

dirt from his sole over the viand upon which your mouth was already feeding by anticipation, and all this, because, having run up between two long rows of tables, and finding neither room nor escape at the top, he is obliged to scale over and *peregrinate amongst decanters, and glasses, and plates*, till he is lucky enough to find a location; if you are to shift for your dinner as you best can, amidst an accumulation of the dirty plates, exhibiting the refuse of the first course in agreeable variety, simply because there are no waiters, or they will not attend to you; if when the cheese and celery is placed on some of the tables, after waiting till you are tired, as a last argument you peremptorily refuse to allow the cloth to stir till it is brought, (in which, though done for the sake of justice, you cannot help taking the appearance of a greedy clownishness,) and are at length compelled to submit with a bad grace on the solemn assurance to every successive application that there is none to be had; if these are the ordinary concomitants of an agricultural feast, they are inconveniences for which neither the compliments of a secretary of state, nor the bad speeches and worse songs of a young heir of nobility, are an adequate recompense.'

If we may trust to the accuracy of the anecdote related in the following paragraph, which rests, however, on merely newspaper authority, it would seem that our author attempted to introduce into this country the agreeable innovation of 'peregrinating amongst decanters, glasses and plates' upon the dinner table, which was practised with so much success at Liverpool, and may perhaps have become general in England. We may remark, *en passant*, that notwithstanding his great complaints of the rapidity with which food is *bolted*,—to use another of his choice phrases,—in this country, it would seem that on this occasion he dispatched business with much more expedition than his fellow-travellers, and that he was too impatient of their delay even to wait for the retirement of the ladies.

'Colonel Hamilton, so called, the author of "Men and Manners in America," conducted himself while in this country with less of the air of a gentleman or man of good breeding, than any traveller who has visited us for years. From all parts of the country we have anecdotes of his conduct, which reflect upon him the utmost discredit. One of them is related as follows in the Albany Argus:—"On the passage of the Hudson, in one of our most richly furnished day boats, the table arrangements of which, as well as the whole internal government, are particularly well ordered, Captain H., seated at breakfast, on the cushioned

seat inside of the table, with ladies on each side of him, rose before a single lady had left the table, and attempted to step upon and across it. He was arrested by the prompt and loud command of the captain of the boat. 'Down, Sir! No man puts his foot upon my table, whilst I have the honor to sit at its head.' The Englishman shrank back, chagrined and rebuked. Indeed, such was his mortification, that although he had entered and paid his passage to Albany, he stopped at the first landing, (West Point.) Whether it was on this occasion that, as the N. Y. Mirror intimates, he was rebuked by the host of the West Point Hotel, for a want of civility in the ladies' drawing-room, we are not informed."

From the inexorable severity of our author in every thing relating to the economy of the table, one would naturally conclude that he belonged to a community in which the science of cookery was carried to the highest perfection, and the etiquette of the banqueting-room understood and practised with the nicest exactness. How far this is really the case in England, our readers have been enabled in part to judge from the heresy into which he and most of his countrymen have fallen in regard to the proper manner of eating eggs, and which we have already exposed upon the unquestionable authority of one of the ex-ministers of Charles X.,---a prince renowned for his love of good eating,---and who, unfortunately for him, thought much more, in arranging his cabinet, of the gastronomical attainments of the candidates for his favour, than of their political principles. That this is not the only error into which the English have fallen in regard to this matter, and that the science of eating and drinking is not in general carried by them to such a degree of perfection as to authorize a traveller, in his quality of Englishman, to come here and take us to task, *ex cathedrâ*, for some pretended infractions of the strict rules of gastronomy, is rendered sufficiently probable by the following remarks, which we borrow from the same authentic source alluded to above.

'To enjoy one's self at table is, in France, an axiom of good sense and good company. In England, on the contrary, to eat to live, seems to be the sole object; there the refinements of cookery are unknown. It is not, in a word, a science; neither does the succession in which dishes should be served up appear to be studied. To cover a table with immense pieces, boiled or roasted, and to demolish them, in the confusion in which chance has placed them, appears to be the whole gastronomic science of

the country. The most ordinary seasoning of the English *cuisine* is a profusion of spices, unsparingly thrown into the sauces. To correct the effect of this, recourse is had to the insipid simplicity of plain-boiled vegetables, which continually circulate round the table, and with which the host would fain load the guest's plate. The meat is either boiled or roasted. The fish is always boiled, and is served invariably with melted butter. The numerous transformations which the natives of the deep undergo before appearing on a French table, are altogether unknown in England. Eggs are excluded from English dinner tables, and even when produced at other meals, they are served in the shell; for the talent of making an omelette enters not into the education of an English cook. English fowls are of an indifferent quality; and game is subjected to a process of roasting which deprives it of all its flavour. The confectionary is badly made and without variety. The vegetables, condemned only to figure as correctives of a too exciting *cuisine*, do not appear upon the table. The *entremets* are limited to a very scanty supply of creams and insipid jellies.

'The following is the order in which an English dinner is served. The first course comprises two soups of different kinds; one highly peppery, in which float morsels of meat; the other a soup *à la Française*. They are placed at either extremity of the table, and helped by the master and mistress of the house. They are succeeded by a dish of fish, and by roast beef, of which the toughest part is served round. Where there is no *plateau*, a salad occupies the middle of the table. This course being removed, regular *entrées* are brought in, and the servants hand round dishes with divisions, containing vegetables. The course which follows is equivalent to the second course in France; but, prepared without taste, it is served confusedly. Each guest attacks (without offering to his neighbour) the dish before him.

'The creams have often disappeared before the roast is thought of; which, ill-carved, always comes cold to him who is to partake of it. The English carve on the dinner table, and as, before proceeding to this operation, each person is asked whether he wishes to taste of the dish or not, a considerable time is lost in fetching the plate of the person who accepts. A dinner never lasts less than two hours and a half or three hours, without including the time the gentlemen sit at table after the departure of the ladies. The salad appears again before the dessert, flanked by some plates of cheese. After the cloth is removed, dried and green fruit with biscuit are placed on the table. These compose the not very brilliant dessert. The serving up of the dinner, however, is the part about which the English give themselves the least trouble. Their table only presents an agreeable *coup d'œil* before dinner. It is then covered with the whitest linen,

and 'a service of plate of greater variety, richer, and more resplendent than is to be seen in any other country.'

It will be seen, that the objections made by Baron Haussez to the economy of an English table, are substantially the same with those which our author urges against us, the article eggs,—in which we happen to be orthodox,—always excepted. If the Americans, according to our author, '*pitchfork their food down their gullets* without the smallest attention to their neighbours,' the English, in like manner, in the more courtly phraseology of the noble Frenchman, 'attack, without offering to their neighbours, the dish set before them.' If, even at the parting feast at Niblo's,---in many respects an agreeable exception to most of our author's experiences in this country,---'the greater part of the dishes were cold before the guests were prepared to attack them,' so in England, according to Baron Haussez, 'the roast, ill-carved, always comes cold to him who is to partake of it.' If, on the same great occasion in New York, there was 'no attempt to serve the chaotic entertainment in courses, a fashion, indeed, but little prevalent in the United States:' so in England 'the succession in which dishes should be served up does not appear to be studied. To cover a table with immense pieces, boiled or roasted, and to demolish them in the confusion in which chance has placed them, appears to be the whole gastronomic science of the country.' If, in America, 'the dressed dishes are decidedly bad, the sauces being composed of little else than liquid grease,' so in England, 'the fish is always boiled, and is served invariably with melted butter.' This last point has in fact been for some time past a standing subject of reproach, on the part of continental travellers, against the natives of the fast-anchored isle. 'What a country,'---said the Neapolitan ambassador Caraccioli, after residing for some time at London,---'What a country for a Christian to live in! Twenty religions and only one kind of sauce!' This was of course the eternal melted butter.

It appears, however, that in these,---and the same is true of most of the other,---points, the complaints made against the American and English domestic economy are precisely the same. We suppose the real truth to be, that both these worthies (our author and Haussez) are, perhaps with some exag-

generations, partly in the right,---that the style of cooking and serving up a dinner is in fact substantially the same in England and in this country,---and that the science of gastronomy is not in either carried to quite the same height of perfection, as in France. For ourselves, we cannot say, that this is with us a matter of very poignant regret. We are rather disposed, on the contrary, to apply to this subject the remark of Themistocles, who admitted that he played indifferently upon the flute, but consoled himself with the reflection, that he was a pretty good proficient in politics; or, in his own language, that he knew how to make a great state out of a little one. We make no professions of insensibility to the value of a good dinner: ---‘the man,’ as Dr. Johnson justly observes, ‘who neglects his stomach (employing a broader word), will be very apt to neglect every thing else.’ But with all our respect for this valuable member, and the art which provides for satisfying its wants, we conceive that there are other arts of still more importance, the superiority in which is, at least, some compensation for the want of truffled turkeys and Perigord pies. But, however this may be, it is at all events quite ridiculous for an Englishman to come here and point out, with the air of making a great discovery, as blemishes in our domestic economy, the precise usages which have been for two centuries the standing topics of reproach upon his own countrymen; and which, as far as they occur at all, do in fact prevail to precisely the same extent on both sides of the Atlantic.

But it is time to quit this subject, however interesting, and proceed to something else. We have accompanied our author to the banqueting-hall, and have found him quarrelling with his bread and butter. Let us now attend him to the ball-room. Here, at least, as a military man and a bachelor, we might have expected to find him, if ever, in good humor. Unluckily, in order to substantiate his objections to the political institutions of the country, in the mode of argument which he has adopted in the work before us, it was necessary to show, not only that the gentlemen chew tobacco, and cat eggs in an irregular way, but that the *tournure* of the ladies is not exactly what it should be. If it can be made out, that the *belles* of New York and the other principal cities are deficient in the ‘nameless graces’ that adorn our author’s countrywomen, it will follow as a matter of

course, that the Constitution and laws of the United States are a complete failure: their principal object being, as is well known, to regulate the dress and deportment of the fairer part of the creation. This consideration seems, after some resistance, to have fairly overcome our author's gallantry, and he addresses himself to the agreeable task of finding fault with the appearance and manners of the New York fashionables, with a degree of resolution, that would have done honor to a better cause. The result is exhibited in the following extract.

'On the last night of the year there was a public assembly, to which I received the honor of an invitation. The ball-rooms were very tolerable, but the entrance detestable. It led close past the bar of the City Hotel, and the ladies, in ascending the stair, which, by the by, was offensively dirty, must have been drenched with tobacco-smoke. Within, however, I found assembled a great deal of beauty. At seventeen, nothing can be prettier than a smiling damsel of New York. At twenty-two, the same damsel, metamorphosed into a matron, has lost a good deal of her attraction. I had never been in so large and miscellaneous a party before. I looked about for solecisms of deportment, but could detect none on the part of the ladies. There was, however, a sort of *Transatlanticism* about them; and even their numerous points of resemblance to my fair countrywomen, had the effect of marking out certain shadowy differences, to be felt rather than described.

'There was certainly an entire absence of what the French call *l'air noble*,---of that look of mingled elegance and distinction, which commands admiration rather than solicits it. Yet the New York ladies are not vulgar. Far from it. I mean only to say that they are *not precisely European*; and with the possession of so much that is amiable and attractive, they may safely plead guilty to want of absolute conformity to an arbitrary standard, the authority of which they are not bound to acknowledge.

'But what shall be said of the gentlemen? Why, simply that a party of the new police, furnished forth with the requisite *toggery*, would have played their part in the ball-room, with about as much grace. There is a certain uncontrollable rigidity of muscle about an American, and a want of sensibility to the lighter graces of deportment, which makes him, perhaps, the most unhopeful of all the votaries of Terpsichore. In this respect the advantage is altogether on the side of the ladies. Their motions are rarely inelegant, and never grotesque. I leave it to other travellers to extend this praise to the gentlemen.'

The young ladies and gentlemen of New York, are certainly under great obligations to the gallant major for the civility with which he is pleased to speak of them, and will doubtless be happy to profit by his suggestions. It is rather unfortunate, that he has not been able to describe more particularly the newly-discovered offence of *Transatlanticism*, which the former are supposed to have committed, or the 'shadowy differences' between their manners, and those of his own countrywomen. In the absence of rules for the improvement of their *tournure*, our *transatlantic* fashionables will naturally look for examples, and with the view of aiding their researches, we beg leave to offer them the following description of a ball at Brighton,---one of the residences of the Court,---extracted from the late work of Prince Pückler Muskau. They will see at a glance, how much they have to gain by endeavoring to make their deportment more *precisely European*.

'A narrow stair-case led directly into the ball-room, which was ill-lighted and miserably furnished, and surrounded with worsted cords, to divide the dancers from the spectators. An orchestra for the musicians was hung with ill-washed draperies, which looked like sheets hung out to dry. Imagine a second room near it, with benches along the walls, and a large tea-table in the middle; in both rooms, the numerous company, raven black from head to foot, *gloves inclusive*; a melancholy style of dancing, without the least trace of vivacity and joyousness, so that the only feeling you have, is that of compassion for the fatigue the poor people are enduring, and you have a true idea of the Brighton Almack's, for so these very fashionable balls are called. The whole establishment is droll enough. Miss W., to whom I was introduced, was by far the prettiest and most graceful girl in the room, and I was almost tempted to dance once more, though from vanity, (for I always danced badly,) I renounced that so-called pleasure years ago. I might safely enough have attempted it here, for, God knows, *no where do people jump about more awkwardly, and a man who waltzes in time is a real curiosity*.

Again: we are told on the same high authority, that

'The *tournure* of the English ladies, with few exceptions, is indeed as awkward as any thing to be seen at B.---Some of them have passed a year or two in France, and are distinguished by a better *tournure* and style of dress.'

Baron Haussez's ideas on these subjects are nearly similar. He describes, in the following manner, a ball given at one of the

first houses in London, and represented in the newspapers of the day, as one of the most brilliant of the season.

‘At twelve o’clock the ball-room was thrown open. For a few minutes the other rooms were freed of the unpleasant crowd; but the respite was of short duration, for the carriages, which every moment continued to set down fresh company in a ratio disproportioned to the extent of the apartments, obliged, at length, a part of the assembly to take refuge in the hall, which was quietly abandoned by the servants, these latter establishing their head-quarters on the steps outside the door. To move was now impossible for those who had not the strength to use their elbows, or the courage to leave a portion of their dress in the midst of the crowd.

‘The supper room was thronged with people who could not make their way out: they who, dying with thirst, in vain attempted to enter this apartment, accused those within of immoderate appetite.

‘In the ball-room there was the same crowding, the same suffocation, with this additional difference, that the male dancers opposed to the approach of the crowd effective *coups de pied*, and *the ladies a certain portion of their person which shall be nameless.*’

So much for the ‘nameless graces’ of our author’s fair countrywomen, and the *precisely European tournure*, in which the New York *belles* are, it seems, deficient. In quoting these passages from the works of the German Prince and the French Ex-minister, we desire, however, to be understood as by no means sanctioning or approving the views taken in them of English manners. These views are obviously sketched in the same spirit of wanton and malignant caricature, that distinguishes those of our author. We quote them merely as offsets to his, for the purpose of showing that other communities, which are justly regarded by all as preeminent in civilization and refinement, and the very highest circles in those communities, are obnoxious to, and have, in fact, been made the objects of similar misrepresentation. *Seek and ye shall find*, is as true of finding faults as of any thing else: and it is, we think, not a little creditable to the *tournure* of the New York *belles*, that so determined a critic as our author, proceeding in the avowed intention of seeing something wrong,---looking about, as he says himself, for solecisms of deportment,---is compelled to invent a new word a foot and a half long, the meaning of which he does not pre-

tend to know himself, in order to be able to impute to them even a *shadow* of variation from the nicest standards of European refinement. What the charge of *transatlanticism*, if examined, would really amount to, it will be time enough to consider, when our author shall have established his claims to the character of an *arbiter elegantiarum*. As the case now stands, we cannot think that a person, whose manners are so offensive that he could not be tolerated in a respectable boarding-house,---who attempted in the presence of ladies, to walk upon the dinner-table,---and who puts into a formal journal of his travels, language too coarse for a decent fore-castle,---is qualified to sit in judgment upon the shadowy and indescribable differences between the manners of the fashionable circles of different countries.

Our readers will judge from the specimens which we have taken, without much choice, chiefly because they happened to stand pretty near the opening of the work, of the spirit and temper, in which it is written. We cannot, of course, undertake to comment with the same detail upon all our author's sayings and doings, nor would it be necessary. A knowledge of the disposition in which he writes, is the proper antidote to his continual, and in many cases, obviously malignant and ungentlemanly misrepresentations. His remarks throughout the whole of his long tour, though not always destitute of shrewdness, and occasionally expressed with point and spirit, are marked, in general, with the same resolute spirit of fault-finding, and the same air of impertinent pretension, amounting at times to complete fatuity, which we have already noticed. At Providence, for example, the principle objects of attention, as our readers are aware, are the manufactories and the university. With most travellers, who might have occasion to pass a day in that city, it would have been a matter of course to visit these establishments, and to make the acquaintance of President Wayland, one of the most distinguished of our scientific and intellectual men. Our author disposes of this part of his subject in the following modest and summary way.

‘ Providence is the capital of the state of Rhode Island, and contains about 25,000 inhabitants. It stands at the foot and on the brow of a hill, which commands a complete view of the fine bay. The great majority of the houses are built of wood, interspersed, however, with tenements of brick, and a few which are at least fronted with stone. It contains considerable cotton

manufactories, which,---*boasting no knowledge of such matters*,---I was not tempted to visit. The college appears a building of some extent, and is finely situated on the summit of a neighbouring height. *The roads were so obstructed by snow, as to render climbing the ascent a matter of more difficulty than I was in the humor to encounter*; and so it was decreed, that Brown's College should remain by me unvisited.'

Instead of troubling his readers with dissertations on these unimportant topics, he selects for discussion the weightier matter of his own dinner at the tavern, upon which he descants in the following exquisite style.

'Having finished my ramble, I returned to the inn; where a very tolerable dinner awaited my appearance. It was the first time I had dined alone since leaving England, and, like my countrymen generally, I am disposed to attach considerable importance to the privilege of choosing my dinner, and the hour of eating it. It is only when alone that one enjoys the satisfaction of feeling that he is a distinct unit in creation, a being *totus, teres, atque rotundus*. At a public ordinary, he is but a fraction, a decimal, at most, but, very probably, a centesimal of a huge masticating monster, with the appetite of a Mastodon or a Behemoth. He labors under the conviction, that his meal has lost in dignity what it has gained in profusion. He is consorted involuntarily with people to whom he is bound by no tie but that of temporary necessity, and, with whom, except the immediate impulse of brutal appetite, he has probably nothing in common. A man, like an American, thus diurnally mortified and abased from his youth upwards, of course knows nothing of the high thoughts which visit the imagination of the solitary, who, having finished a good dinner, reposes with a full consciousness of the dignity of his nature, and the high destinies to which he is called. The situation is one, which naturally stimulates the whole inert mass of his speculative benevolence. He is at peace with all mankind, for *he reclines on a well-stuffed sofa*, and there are wine and walnuts on the table. He is on the best terms with himself, and recalls his own achievements in arms, literature, or philosophy, in a spirit of the most benign complacency. If he look to the future, the prospect is bright and unclouded. If he revert to the past, its "written troubles," its failures and misfortunes are erased from the volume, and his memories are exclusively those of gratified power. *He is in his slippers, and comfortable robe-de-chambre*, and what to him, at such a moment, are the world and its ambitions? I appeal to the philosopher, and he answers,---Nothing!'

• This is the true Malvolio vein. 'Sitting in my state, calling

my officers about me *in my branched velvet gown*, having come from a *day-bed*, where I left Olivia sleeping,---letting them know I know my place as I would they should do theirs.' &c. Even this, however, is improved upon at Philadelphia. The water-works of that city are justly reckoned among the principal curiosities of the place, and indeed of the country. These too our author declined seeing, for reasons still more extraordinary than those, which prevented him from visiting the cotton manufactories and the university at Providence.

'The Philadelphians, however, pride themselves far more on their water-works than on their State-House. Their *Io Pæans* on account of the former are loud and unceasing, and I must say, the annoyance which these occasion to a traveller, is very considerable. A dozen times a-day was I asked whether I had seen the water-works, and on my answering in the negative, I was told that I positively must visit them; that they were unrivalled in the world; that no people but the Americans could have executed such works, and by implication, that no one but an Englishman, meanly jealous of American superiority would omit an opportunity of admiring their unrivalled mechanism.

'There is no accounting for the eccentricities of human character. *I had not heard these circumstances repeated above fifty times, ere I began to run restive, and determined not to visit the water-works at all.* To this resolution I adhered, in spite of all annoyance, with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause. Of the water-works of Philadelphia, therefore, I know nothing, and any reader, particularly solicitous of becoming acquainted with the principle of this remarkable piece of machinery, must consult the pages of other travellers.'

This we suppose to be the *ne plus ultra* of fatuity. That a man, possessing, no doubt, originally, the usual stock of ordinary good sense, should have permitted his head to be turned to this extent, by the little success of writing a tolerably popular second-rate novel, is a melancholy proof, in addition to a thousand others, of the facility with which that operation is performed, especially when the *knowledge-box* happens, as was probably the case in the present instance, to be naturally none of the strongest.

With Boston, and the society which he saw here, our author professes to have been very much pleased, although, as far as facts are concerned, his observations are exceedingly scanty. Having travelled by mail from Providence to Boston, and re-

sided three weeks in the latter city, he was of course qualified to pass judgment *ex cathedra* upon the New England character, and accordingly writes, while at Boston, two long chapters of general remarks upon that subject. As the impression made upon him by the only part of New England which he had seen, seems to have been decidedly agreeable, one would naturally have expected that any conclusions, which he might have thought proper to draw from the materials in his possession, would have been rather favorable than otherwise. Instead of this, the two chapters are written throughout in a strain of almost unmingled invective. To draw such conclusions from such premises, argues some principle of conduct deeper than simple thoughtlessness, or mere political and national prejudice, and seems to require the supposition of a strong personal disgust in the writer. Whether any feeling of that kind had been generated by the gentle admonitions upon his deportment, which he is understood to have received at the hotel in New York, and on board the North River steamboat, we are not informed. He appears to have felt, that an apology was necessary for the precipitation with which he had formed his opinions. In a note upon one of the chapters alluded to, he states that 'the observations on the New England character would have been more appropriately deferred till a later period of the work, but *having written them, they must now stand where chance has placed them.* I have only to beg that they may be taken, not as the hasty impressions received during a few days or weeks residence in Boston, but as the final result of my observations on this interesting people, both in their own States and in other portions of the Union.' How the contents of two chapters, written at Boston, can be regarded as the results of observations made afterwards in other places, and why it was absolutely necessary that they should stand, because he had written them, our author has not condescended to explain. The presumption undoubtedly is, that it would have derogated from the dignity of so great a personage, to correct a rough draft, or even to alter the arrangement of his matter; and the passage affords another example of the same graceful modesty that shines so conspicuously in those which describe his proceedings at Philadelphia and Providence. We select from the two chapters in

question, a few of the more pointed and characteristic paragraphs, as specimens of the tone and manner of the whole.

‘Mammon has no more zealous worshipper than your true Yankee. His homage is not merely that of the lip, or of the knee; it is an entire prostration of the heart; the devotion of all powers, bodily and mental, to the service of the idol. He views the world but as one vast exchange, on which he is impelled, both by principle and interest, to over-reach his neighbors if he can. The thought of business is never absent from his mind. To him there is no enjoyment without traffic. He travels snail-like, with his shop or his counting-house on his back, and, like other hawkers, is always ready to open his budget of little private interests for discussion or amusement. The only respite he enjoys from the consideration of his own affairs, is the time he is pleased to bestow on prying into yours. In regard to the latter, he evidently considers that he has a perfect right to unlimited sincerity. There is no baffling him. His curiosity seems to rise in proportion to the difficulty of its gratification. He will track you through every evasion, detect all your doublings, or, if thrown out, will hark back so skilfully on the scent, that you are at length fairly hedged in a corner.

‘A New Englander passes through the statutory process of education, and enters life with the intimate conviction, that he has mastered, if not the *omne scibile*, at least every thing valuable within the domain of intellect. It never occurs to him as possible, that he may have formed a wrong conclusion on any question, however intricate, of politics or religion. He despises all knowledge abstracted from the business of the world, and prides himself on his stock of practical truths. In mind, body, and estate, he believes himself the first and noblest of God’s creatures. The sound of triumph is ever on his lips, and, like a man who has mounted the first step of a ladder, it is his pride to look down on his neighbors, whom he overtops by an inch, instead of directing his attention to the great height yet to be surmounted.

‘Jonathan is sober and industrious, but his reputation for honesty is at a discount. The whole Union is full of stories of his cunning frauds, and of the impositions he delights to perpetrate on his more simple neighbors. Whenever his love of money comes in competition with his zeal for religion, the latter is sure to give way. He will insist on the scrupulous observance of the Sabbath, and cheat his customer on the Monday morning. His life is a comment on the text, *Qui festinat ditescere, non erit innocens*. The whole race of Yankee

peddlers, in particular, are proverbial for dishonesty. These go forth annually in thousands to lie, cog, cheat, swindle, in short, to get possession of their neighbors' property, in any manner it can be done with impunity. Their ingenuity in deception is confessedly very great. They warrant broken watches to be the best time-keepers in the world; sell pinchbeck trinkets for gold; and have always a large assortment of wooden nutmegs, and stagnant barometers. In this respect they resemble the Jews, of which race, by the by, I am assured, there is not a single specimen to be found in New England. There is an old Scotch proverb, "Corbies never pick out corbies' een."

'The New Englanders are not an amiable people. One meets in them much to approve, little to admire, and nothing to love. They may be disliked, however, but they cannot be despised. There is a degree of energy and sturdy independence about them, incompatible with contempt. Abuse them as we may, it must still be admitted they are a singular and original people. Nature, in framing a Yankee, seems to have given him double brains, and half heart.

'The character of the New Englanders is a subject on which, I confess, I feel tempted to be prolix. In truth, it seems to me so singular and anomalous, so compounded of what is valuable and what is vile, that I never feel certain of having succeeded in expressing the precise combination of feeling which it inspires. As a philanthropist, I should wish them to be less grasping and more contented with the blessings they enjoy, and would willingly barter a good deal of vanity, and a little substantial knavery, for an additional infusion of liberal sentiment, and generous feeling.'

It will, of course, readily occur to our readers, that this same 'New England character,' which our author is pleased to represent as so very 'singular and anomalous,' and which he has painted in such very flattering colors, is no other than that of his own countrymen, himself included, except so far as he may have metamorphosed, or, as he would probably say in his improved English, *transmogrified* himself, by his campaigns in foreign countries. Englishmen are of course Englishmen all the world over, and there is no part of the world, in which the characteristics of the common stock have been sustained with greater purity, or with a less mixture of foreign alloy, than in New England. Our author himself admits, that 'two centuries have done little to efface the character which our forefathers brought with them. All the *gentillesses* which we have quoted above, are therefore so many pretty compliments which the

gallant gentleman has paid, apparently with a most innocent unconsciousness, to his countrymen, his neighbors, and himself. We find accordingly that the objections which are here made to the New England character, though stated in an unusually ill-natured form, are no other than the standing and hackneyed topics of reproach, which have always been urged against the English of the mother country; such as excessive gravity, an external coldness and reserve, which are supposed to indicate the absence of kind and generous feelings; an exclusive devotion to gain; an indisposition to be amused, and an overweening estimate of their own advantages, political and personal. These are the charges which, for two centuries past, have rung through the continent in a thousand different forms, and are constantly repeated as often as a traveller from the south of Europe crosses the channel. In the last editions by the German Prince, and Baron Haussez, they have manifestly lost nothing of their pungency. The *morgue Anglaise* is a proverb at Paris. Voltaire exhausted his wit in laughing at the *milords* who were accustomed to parade their weariness,---*promener leurs ennuis*, ---through all parts of Europe. Bonaparte, when he spoke of the English, never forgot to characterize them as a nation of shopkeepers, dead to every sentiment of honor and generosity, and actuated by no motive or principle but a paltry love of gain. Madame de Stael, in her *Corinna*, has given a picture of a Scotch tea-party, which is enough to make a man put on a fur cloak in midsummer. Count Pecchio, the last of the travellers in England, tells us, that ‘the English of our day are so tranquil and so cold, that they seem to us men of ice, and that it is often said that they have no blood in their veins.’ It is really not a little amusing to see these stale criticisms on the English, after having, as we have said, rung through the continent of Europe, for about two centuries, been a thousand times over examined and re-examined in England,---allowed as far as they are just; refuted, denied, or explained, as far as they are false or exaggerated, and so often reduced to their proper value, that the whole question may be regarded as finally adjudged and settled in the highest courts of appeal,---to see them, we say, hashed up anew, with no other change of form but an ample condiment of spleen, and brought forward by an Englishman with an air of importance and almost mystery,

as faults newly discovered by himself in the New England character.

Of the various modifications of the English character, the two which are generally supposed to resemble each other most nearly are the New England and the Scotch. This again is allowed by our author, who says that 'in character there are many points of resemblance between the Scotch and the New Englanders.' The poisoned chalice, which he wishes to administer to our lips, returns therefore directly back to his own, not merely as an Englishman, but as a native of the particular part of the mother country, in which he happens to reside. It is true that he attempts to make a distinction between the New Englanders and the Scotch, by representing the former as a horde of sharpers, 'going forth annually by thousands into other regions, to lie, cog, cheat, and swindle,' while he gives to the Scotch a high character for honesty. It is of course needless to add, that this exclusively New England failing is precisely the one, which is habitually imputed by the English themselves, though in much more decent language than our author has used, to their northern neighbors. That the Scotch are a set of tall, lean, hungry, red-haired, crafty knaves, inhabiting a bleak and barren region, presenting only one agreeable prospect, namely, that of the road to London, which they annually travel in crowds for the purpose of defrauding and eating out the substance of honest John Bull proper, is the fixed belief of that respectable personage, and is no doubt as well-founded as the corresponding persuasion of a considerable portion of our own countrymen, that the Yankees are employed the greater part of their time in fabricating wooden nutmegs, wherewith to impose upon the simplicity and pick the pockets of the generous, high-minded and too-confiding South. The very remark which our author here applies to New England, that, in consequence of the extraordinary acuteness of the inhabitants in matters of business, the Jews find it impossible to get a living among them, has been, a thousand times over, made upon Scotland, and sustained as often by the identical Scotch proverb which he cites with such apparent complacency as an illustration of it.

The charges made by our author against the New England character, being, as we have seen, precisely the same with those which are habitually urged against the English character,

and particularly the Scotch modification of it, whatever foundation there may really be for them, come with rather an ill grace from a traveller, who is himself an Englishman, and from the north country. There are also some personal considerations in our author's case, which, duly weighed, might perhaps have satisfied him, that some at least, and those the most offensive of his accusations, were not so entirely free from doubt as he appears to have supposed them. He lauds himself continually, throughout his work, upon the favorable reception which he met with every where, and, as far as this city is concerned, we can vouch for the correctness of his representation. Now if the Yankees are so entirely given up to the worship of Mammon as he describes them to be:---if their homage is not merely that of the lip, or the knee, but an entire prostration of the heart, the devotion of all their powers, bodily and mental, to the service of the idol;---how happens it, that they found so much time to devote to the author of Cyril Thornton? What had they to gain, by giving him dinners and balls,---by leaving their counting rooms and offices, to accompany him on his visits to the objects that engage the attention of a traveller, when,---as did not always happen,---he would so far condescend from his high estate as to consent to look at them? He brought with him neither merchandise to sell, nor money to buy. There was nothing very imposing in the rank of a Scotch Captain on half pay, and certainly nothing very attractive in our author's conversation and manners. He brought, it is true, letters of introduction to respectable persons in most of our cities. These, however, he did not take the trouble of delivering in person, but, as he is careful to inform us, regularly transmitted through the post-office,---a piece of rudeness, which, in any other country, would have entirely shut him out of society. How happened it then, we repeat, that an unknown foreigner,---unassisted by rank, fortune, or any personal advantage,---coarse and offensive in his manners, ---almost unintelligible in conversation,---dropping from the clouds into the midst of a community of strangers, was yet received with marked attention wherever he went? It is needless to say, that the only effective letter of recommendation, which he brought with him, was his literary reputation. The cultivated circles in our cities were curious to make the acquaintance of the writer of a book, which they had read with pleasure, and,

in consideration of his talents, cheerfully overlooked the offensive peculiarities in his personal deportment, although they probably did not anticipate the outpouring of malignity with which their civilities have been repaid. Had they been as exclusively devoted to money as he is pleased to represent them, he might and probably would have travelled from Eastport to New Orleans, without receiving any other notice than such as befel him in the North River steamboat and the New York hotel.

The devotion to literary---or to speak more generally---intellectual power, that prevails in this country, is, in fact, one of the remarkable traits in the national character, and is much more deep and fervent,---whatever our author may think of it,---than that which is paid to wealth. Mere wealth commands in this country,---as it must, and when tolerably well administered, ought to command every where,---consideration and respect; but creates no feeling of interest in its owner. Intellectual eminence, especially when accompanied by high moral qualities, seems to operate like a charm upon the hearts of the whole community. This effect is much more perceptible here than in Europe, where the intellectual men are overshadowed by an hereditary privileged class, who regard them every where as inferior, and in some countries refuse to associate with them at all. The highest professional or literary distinction gives no admission to most of the courts of Europe, and only on a very unequal footing to the fashionable circles. A lawyer or a clergyman of talent is occasionally allowed a seat at the foot of a nobleman's table, but to aspire to the hand of his daughter would be the height of presumption. At the close of a long life of labor he takes his seat, too late to receive any great satisfaction from his new position, in the House of Lords, as Chancellor, Chief-Justice, or Bishop. Through the whole active period of his life, he has moved, as a matter of course, in a secondary sphere. With us, on the contrary, great wealth, the only accidental circumstance that confers distinction, is commonly the result of a life of labor. The intellectual men assume at once, and maintain through life, a commanding position among their contemporaries,---give the tone in the first social circles,---and, at the maturity of their powers and influence, receive from their fellow-citizens demonstrations of attachment and respect, which have rarely, if ever, been shown before to

the eminent men of any other country. The Presidentships and the Governorships, the places in the cabinet, and on the bench of justice, in Congress and in the State Legislatures,---the commissions in the Army and Navy,---the foreign embassies,---elsewhere the monopoly of a few privileged families,---are here the rewards of intellectual preeminence. Lord Brougham, though certainly in every way one of the most illustrious and truly deserving public characters that have appeared in England in modern times, has never received from his countrymen any proof of approbation half so flattering, as the sort of civic triumph with which Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster were lately welcomed on their respective visits to the East and the West. Mr. Irving, since his late return from Europe, has been the object of more attention of a public kind, than was shown through the whole course of his life to Sir Walter Scott, undoubtedly the most popular British writer of the last century.

This respect for intellectual power, which forms so remarkable a feature in the national character, ought not to have escaped the attention of a traveller, whose pretensions to notice are founded entirely upon that basis, and who had experienced the operation of it so favorably in his own person. It has often been evinced, in a very pleasing way, in the testimonials of regard shown to the memory of distinguished literary men, even of foreign countries. At the late lamented decease of the illustrious British poet, just alluded to, the public feeling of regret was evidently quite as strong in this country as in England. Subscriptions were raised at New York, to aid in the purchase of Abbotsford for his family: and a monument to his memory is now in preparation at Albany. We regret to learn that the object, in which the New York subscriptions were intended to aid, is not likely to be effected. The marble tablet that covers the remains of Henry Kirke White, in the churchyard of Nottingham in England, was placed there by a gentleman of this city, no otherwise interested in his memory, than by the pleasure he had taken in reading his poems. The same disposition to honor the memory of the illustrious dead exists in England, but has not in every instance been acted upon in an equally graceful and appropriate manner. The intention, entertained by some of the citizens of London to erect a new monument to Milton, on the occasion of repairing the church of St. Giles, where his remains

were deposited, led to a transaction which does but little credit to the parties concerned. The following account of it was copied from the Diary of General Murray, into a late number of the London Monthly Magazine.

‘ 24th August, 1790.---The church of St Giles, Cripplegate, being in a somewhat dilapidated state, the parish resolved to commence repairing it, and this was deemed a favorable opportunity to raise a subscription for the purpose of erecting a monument to the memory of our immortal bard, Milton, who, it was known, had been buried in this church. The parish register book bore the following entry :---“ 12th November, 1674, John Milton, gentleman, consump’ion, chaneell.” Mr. Aseough, whose grandfather died in 1759, aged 84, had been often heard to say, that Milton was buried under the desk in the chaneel. Messrs. Strong, Cole, and other parishioners, determined to search for the remains, and orders were given to the workmen, on the first of this month, to dig for the coffin. On the third, in the afternoon, it was discovered; the soil in which it had been deposited was of a calcareous nature, and it rested upon another coffin, which there can be no doubt was that of Milton’s father, report having stated that the poet was buried, at his request, near the remains of his parent; and the same register book contained the entry, “ John Milton, gentleman, 15th March, 1646.” No other coffin being found in the chaneel, which was entirely dug over, there can be no uncertainty as to their identity. Messrs. Strong and Cole, having carefully cleansed the coffin with a brush and wet sponge, ascertained that the exterior wooden case, in which the leaden one had been enclosed, was entirely mouldered away, and the leaden coffin contained no inscription or date. At the period when Milton died, it was customary to paint the name, age, &c. of the deceased, on the wooden covering, no plates or inscription being then in use; but all had long since crumbled into dust. The leaden coffin was much corroded; its length was five feet ten inches. The above gentlemen, satisfied as to the identity of the precious remains, and having drawn up a statement to that effect, gave orders on Tuesday, the 3d, to the workmen to fill up the grave; but they neglected to do so, intending to perform that labor on the Saturday following. On the next day, the 4th, a party of parishioners, Messrs. Cole, Laming, Taylor, and Holmes, having met to dine at the residence of Mr. Fountain, the overseer, the discovery of Milton’s remains became the subject of conversation, and it was agreed upon that they should disinter the body, and examine it more minutely.---At eight o’clock at night, heated with drink, and accompanied by a man named Hawksworth, who carried a flambeau,

they sallied forth, and proceeded to the church. The sacrilegious work now commences. The coffin is dragged from its gloomy resting-place. Holmes made use of a mallet and chisel, and cut open the coffin slantways from the head to the breast. The lead being doubled up, the corpse became visible; it was enveloped in a thick white shroud, the ribs were standing up regularly, but the instant the shroud was removed they fell. The features of the countenance could not be traced, but the hair was in an astonishingly perfect state; its color a light brown, its length six inches and a half, and, although somewhat clotted, it appeared, after having been well washed, as strong as the hair of a living being. The short locks growing towards the forehead, and the long ones flowing from the same place down the sides of the face, it became obvious that these were most certainly the remains of Milton. The 4to print of the poet, by Faithorne, taken from life in 1670, four years before he died, represents him as wearing his hair exactly in the above manner. Fountain said he was determined to have two of the teeth, but as they resisted the pressure of the fingers, *he struck the jaw with a paving stone* and several teeth then fell out. There were only five in the upper jaw, and these were taken by Fountain; the four that were in the lower jaw were seized upon by Taylor, Hawkesworth, and the sexton's man. *The hair*, which had been carefully combed and tied together before the interment, *was forcibly pulled off the skull* by Taylor and another; but Ellis the player, who had now joined the party, told the former that being a good hairworker, if he would let him have it he would pay a guinea bowl of punch; adding, that such a relic would be of great service, by bringing his name into notice. Ellis, therefore, became possessed of all the hair: he likewise took a part of the shroud, and a bit of the skin of the skull; indeed, he was only prevented carrying off the head by the sextons, Hoppy and Grant, who said that *they intended to exhibit the remains*, which was afterwards done, *each person paying 6d to view the body*. These fellows, I am told, gained near 100*l.* by the exhibition. Laming put one of the leg bones in his pocket. My informant assured me, continued Mr. Thornton, that while the work of profanation was proceeding, the gibes and jokes of these vulgar fellows made his heart sick, and he retreated from the scene, feeling as if he had witnessed the repast of a vampire. Viscount C. who sat near me, said to Sir G., "This reminds me of the words of one of the Fathers of the church, 'and little boys have played with the bones of great kings.'"

In the elegant Latin Epistle, which the minstrel of Paradise Lost addressed to his father in defence of his devotion to poetry, he ventures to anticipate, with the modest assurance of conscious

merit, the posthumous honors that awaited his memory.---‘ My features too,’ he says, ‘ the sculptor may perhaps one day design in marble, entwining the hair with a garland of Paphian myrtle or Parnassian laurel ; but I shall be resting at the time in careless peace.’

Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus,
Nectens aut Paphiâ myrti aut Parnasside lauri
Fronde comas, at ego securâ pace quiescam.

The poet's vision of posthumous fame has been fully realized. His bust in marble surmounts his monument in Westminster abbey, upon which these beautiful verses appear as an inscription. The prediction of the undisturbed quiet of his last resting-place was, it seems, less fortunate. If we were disposed to retort upon the countrymen of our author the charges of cupidity, coarseness and utter destitution of all the finer feelings of our nature, which he so liberally makes upon us, we should want no better evidence in support of them, as far at least as a single transaction may be supposed to illustrate the character of a nation, than the fact of the citizens of the metropolis itself invading by night the sanctuary where the bones of Milton were deposited with those of his honoured parent, dragging them forth from their consecrated resting-place, breaking the jaw-bones to fragments with paving-stones, pulling off the hair by force from the skull, alternately quarrelling and joking about the division of the spoil, and finally exhibiting the whole to the public for sixpence a head. If the New York shopman was denounced by our author as a *brutal barbarian*, for venturing to look at him a little too sharply, we should like to know what epithets he would bestow upon the overseer and other parishioners of St. Giles, Cripplegate. We have no inclination, however, to pursue this line of argument, and are fully aware that this disgraceful transaction is in no way connected with the national character, and proves nothing but the brutality of the wretches immediately concerned in it. We have copied it, not as bearing at all upon the present question, but as a narrative, in itself very curious, and fraught with a deep and strong, though painful sort of interest.

While we have no disposition to recriminate upon our author by charging his countrymen with the base propensities which

he attributes to us, it is also not our intention to enter into a formal defence of the common English character against the objections which he makes to it, as exemplified here, and which have been, as we have said, reduced to their proper value a thousand times over. The most offensive and at the same time the most groundless of them, is that of a want of generous and benevolent feelings, founded apparently upon a supposed reserve in exterior deportment,---as if a remarkable outward warmth and vivacity of manner were the natural indications of profound sensibility. Every one knows that the case is directly the reverse. The substantial benevolence of the English character, unquestionably one of its most remarkable features, displays itself here, as in the mother country, not in professions, or forms of courtesy, but in acts. There is probably no community on the face of the globe, of equal resources, where larger appropriations are annually made for objects tending to the relief of distress,---the promotion of learning and good morals,---the encouragement of patriotic and generous feelings, and in general for all purposes, appertaining to the higher department of our nature, than in New England. If it were worth while to go into any discussion upon the subject, we might mention, as proofs of what we have just stated, the proceedings of this description that have taken place in this city during the last year. In the course of the last winter, the project, which had been formed two or three years ago for the foundation of an institution for the Education of the Blind, came to maturity. The plan was submitted to the Legislature of Massachusetts, which made a handsome appropriation to the object. An appeal was then made to the benevolence of individuals, which was promptly answered, by the donation from an eminent citizen of his own residence,---one of the best houses in the city,---for the use of the Institution, on the condition that the sum of fifty thousand dollars should be contributed by other individuals,---a condition which was satisfied within a month. Of this large sum, more than eleven thousand dollars were raised at the Faneu Fair, held by the ladies; and it is really worthy of remark, that a much larger sum was obtained in this way, on this occasion, in the comparatively little city of Boston, than at a similar Fair, held about the same time at London, for the interesting purpose of the relief of distressed foreigners, under the immediate pa-

tronage of the ladies of the Royal Family, and all the principal nobility. Hardly was the subscription for the Institution for the Education of the Blind closed, when a new effort was made to obtain funds for the erection of the monument on Bunker-Hill, and within a few weeks nearly fifty thousand dollars were collected for this purpose, principally by the exertions of the mechanics. While these movements were in progress, a collection of three or four thousand dollars was made for the relief of a college in the State of Ohio,---another of the same amount for the Colonization Society, and several more of less importance, beside the regular and standing appropriations for literary, charitable and missionary institutions, previously in existence. Such is the extent of the sacrifices made for these purposes, during the present year: we mention them not as extraordinary, because we do not suppose that they much exceed the average amount annually contributed in the same way, but simply as the facts nearest at hand that bear upon the question. The amount is certainly considerable for a community, of which the population, including that of the neighbouring towns that generally join in such contributions, does not exceed a hundred thousand souls.

The truth is, that our author has entirely mistaken the basis of the New England character, when he states that a selfish and calculating spirit is the leading feature in it. The New England character, like the English and German, which are different varieties of the same common type, is naturally ardent, enthusiastic and imaginative. The German race, which has spread itself over the whole north of Europe, and is now spreading itself over the whole of North America, has always exhibited in all its various locations, and under all the names which it has borne and still bears in different parts of the world, a highly poetical temperament, the basis of which is, of course, a keen sensibility to all the influences of nature, whether physical or moral. We find, accordingly, that Madame de Staël, in her powerful analysis of the German character, considers its leading and characteristic feature as *Enthusiasm*; agreeing in this opinion with the common sentiment of competent judges. Restrained in some degree in its development,—so far as the forms of ordinary social intercourse are concerned,---by the natural effect of a less propitious climate, the ardor of the Ger-

man temperament has turned itself chiefly to literature and action. While the manners of the nations of the south of Europe are more lively than those of their northern neighbours, the literature of the north is, on the other hand, more poetical, and the moral tone of society more lofty and generous. Count Pecchio, whom we just now quoted, has correctly seized this idea, and has expressed it in a happy manner with immediate reference to England. 'A variety of circumstances,' he remarks, 'tend to repress the passions on frivolous occasions, and to give them the reins on those of importance. In family matters, in social intercourse, in every day discussion, they (the English) exhibit calmness, coolness, deliberation,---in great enterprises, in war, in the perils of the country, courage and enthusiasm. The same Englishman, who hardly returns your salute, and who sits at table with you, like a Chinese image, in the day of battle, or in the heat of a contested election, gives himself up to unbounded enthusiasm. Where is the enterprise, by which glory may be gained, that the Englishman does not engage in, heart and soul? Mungo Park plunges alone into the deserts of Africa: unintimidated by the mistake of his first journey, he risks a second, and perishes. Captain Cochrane returns on foot from Kamtchatka to Petersburg, a distance of six thousand miles, alone and unfriended, as if it had been a walk in Hyde Park: he goes to America to take another stroll across the Cordilleras, and dies. Lord Byron abandons the sweet converse of the muses, the yet dearer smiles of the Italian fair, to die on a foreign soil, in defence of the freedom of a foreign land. Read the life of Sir Robert Wilson, and you will see how many perils he has voluntarily encountered in the cause of the oppressed, whether kings, nations, or individuals. Any of these men, who showed in these cases an enthusiasm worthy of a knight-errant, would have disdained in social life to be guilty of an act of impatience, even to a servant.'

So far as New England is concerned, the history of the country, from its settlement up to the present day, is little else than a record of the continual sacrifice of every selfish consideration to the loftiest moral principles that can operate upon the human mind. The foundation of the New England Colonies was an act of heroic self-sacrifice on the altar of Religion. So was the whole existence of the pilgrims for the first century and a half,

encamped as they were, in a still unsubdued wilderness, with their muskets for ever at their sides, a line of French fortresses along the whole frontier, and the Indian with his fire-brand and tomahawk at the back-door. Was this a position to be taken and sustained by men who acted upon selfish calculations of pecuniary profit? See them in the war of 1745, marching out under Sir William Pepperel to the conquest of Louisburg. Was this an act of selfish calculation? What had they to do with the fortress of Louisburg, or with the Austrian succession, which furnished the pretext for the war? See them in the war of 1756, rushing forward a second time with a sort of enthusiasm upon the same gratuitous service, and actually keeping on foot a larger proportion of their population than the Emperor Napoleon ever did of the French, at the height of his military frenzy. The peace of 1763 finally relieved our fathers from the dangerous neighbourhood of the Indians and the French, but only to expose them to another series of hostile invasions from the Government itself. What has now the dictate of selfish calculation? Undoubtedly to pay the tea and stamp taxes, and go on quietly making money. Their whole conduct, from the close of the war of 1756 until the peace of Independence, was another exhibition of the same heroic self-sacrificing spirit, which occasioned the settlement of the country. Nor was it the peculiar virtue of a few superior minds. The Adamses, the Otises, the Warrens and the Quincys embodied and exemplified the spirit that prevailed through the country, and carried the whole population with them at every step in their progress. Our author's view of the New England character is, in fact, the very reverse of the truth. Instead of being governed by an exclusive devotion to gain, these Colonies are almost the only ones in the whole number, that were not founded with a view to pecuniary profit or any secular advantage. Most of the other settlements were made with the direct, avowed, and undoubtedly very honorable purpose of acquiring property. With the pilgrim fathers of New England, the service of God, as they understood it, was the exclusive principle of action; and their extraordinary success affords a fine illustration of the truth of the memorable saying of a profound writer, that 'no state has ever flourished, of which the foundations were not, in one way or another, laid in Religion.' That the foundations of the New

England Colonies were so laid,⁵ has been the real source, not only of their unparalleled prosperity, but in a great measure of the prosperity of the whole country, which has always received, and still receives, its principal impulse from this quarter. How far the noble principles and sentiments, that uniformly actuated our fathers, are sustained in the present generation of the inhabitants of New England, it is of course not for us to say: but as our author extends his censure over the whole period of our history, and specifically includes in it the venerable founders of the Colonies, it is quite apparent that his opinion, at least, is entitled to very little attention; and that he is incapacitated, either by ignorance of facts or obliquity of moral feeling, from forming a correct judgment upon the subject.

We have been gradually drawn into a somewhat longer dissertation upon this topic than we had intended, and must hasten to take up the few others, upon which our limits will allow us to touch. In giving an account of his visit to Washington, our author comments at some length upon the character and manners of the principal persons employed in the various departments of the Government, upon the modes of proceeding in Congress, and upon the general principles and operation of our political institutions. As the work was avowedly written for political effect, it is here, of course, if any where, that we are to look for the substantial part of it. We regret to say, that this portion has no more pretension than the rest to the praise of either accurate observation, just and deep thought, or the manly candor and generosity of sentiment, which are never forgotten even by a political opponent, who means to combine with that character the manners and feelings of a gentleman. The strain of thought is common-place; the language coarse, even to indecency, and the statements so entirely at variance with fact, as to become at times almost ludicrous. Of this description is the attempt to make it appear that the British Parliament is a body compelled by pressure of business to be economical of time, while the American Congress does nothing, and has in fact very little to do.

‘It is evident that such a style of discussion,—if discussion it can be called,—could only become prevalent in the assembly with an abundance of leisure for the enactment of these oratorical interludes. In a body like the British Parliament, com-

pelled by the pressure of business to be economical of time, it could not possibly be tolerated. The clamorous interests of a great nation are matters too serious to be trifled with, and time is felt to be too valuable for expenditure on speeches better fitted for a spouting club, than a grave, deliberative assembly.

‘The truth, I believe, is, that the American Congress have really very little to do. All the multiplied details of local and municipal legislation fall within the province of the State governments, and the regulation of commerce and foreign intercourse practically includes all the important questions which they are called on to decide.’

It is a matter of curiosity, to compare with this account the real state of the case. In England, as our author says himself in another passage, the actual business of legislation is done by the Executive department of the Government. There are no standing committees of Parliament, and, as a general rule, the ministers prepare all the bills. At the time when our author wrote his book, the House of Commons met every day during the session at 4 o’clock, P. M. If a quorum (forty members) was not present when the Speaker took the chair,—a frequent occurrence,—the sitting was immediately adjourned, and the whole day was lost. If a quorum happened to be present, the House remained in session two or three hours, and transacted business commonly with a very thin attendance. A few times, in the course of the session, when some important political question was to be discussed, there was a call of the House, and a pretty general attendance of the members. On these occasions, the debates were sometimes prolonged through the night, and now and then, though very rarely, adjourned to a following one. Special Committees were from time to time appointed to examine and report upon particular subjects, and it is only in this form, that any part of the business of legislation was done by either House of Parliament in Committee.

So much for the pressure of business and the economy of time in the British Parliament. Let us now see how matters stand in this country. Here, no part of the work of legislation is performed by the Executive. The business is distributed at the commencement of a session of Congress among a variety of standing committees of the two Houses, who regularly prepare all the bills. These committees commonly meet every day at ten o’clock, and remain in session till twelve. At that hour the

sitting of the two Houses commences, and, as a general rule, the members are all in attendance. They regularly remain together till four; and towards the close of the session, when business becomes pressing, they return and sit several hours in the evening.

The result is, that while in England the real work of legislation is done by the Ministry, and the actual labor of Parliament reduces itself to the attendance of from forty to fifty members two or three hours a day, for the purpose of registering without debate the bills presented to them; in this country the whole work of legislation is done by Congress; the members are regularly all in attendance, and are actually engaged in the despatch of business in one form or another, about six hours a day through the session. Our author's mistakes on this head are the more palpable, inasmuch as the points of comparison between the course of proceeding in England and in this country, to which we have adverted, are all particularly noted in other passages by himself. It is also worthy of remark, that at the very time when he was preparing his work, the British House of Commons reformed its mode of transacting business, and adopted the American usage of meeting every day at twelve o'clock. This is doubtless one of the instances alluded to with so much bitterness by the author in his preface, in which 'the institutions and experience of the United States were deliberately quoted by certain drivellers in the Reformed Parliament as affording safe precedents for British legislation,' and which were the means of securing to the world the mass of valuable information and elegant language, contained in the work before us.

Our author comments at considerable length upon the style of eloquence that prevails in Congress, of which he appears to entertain a very unfavourable opinion. After this follow some particular observations on the manner of Mr. Randolph, and a long analysis of a speech made by a Mr. *Tristram Burges* of Rhode Island, in reply to Mr. Cambreleng. The 'a Mr. Burges,' is rather comic, and brings to mind the 'one John Milton' of Whitclocke. Mr. Burges, the first man in his native State and a leading member of Congress, is a person, one would think, of at least as much consequence as the author of a second-rate novel. The analysis of his speech is written in a style of gross and vul-

gar virulence, not often to be met with in the most licentious newspapers. Will it be believed, that the leading topics of ridicule are the changes in his personal appearance, incident to advancing years?

‘ The orator commenced upon gray hair, and logically drew the conclusion, that, as such discoloration was the natural consequence of advanced years, any disrespectful allusion to the effect, implied contempt for the cause. Now, among every people in the world, Mahometan or Christian, civilized or barbarous, old age was treated with reverence. Even on the authority of Scripture, we are entitled to assert, and the gray head should be regarded as a crown of honor. All men must become old, unless they die young; and every member of this House must reckon on submitting to the common fate of humanity, &c. &c. &c., and so on for about a quarter of an hour.

‘ Having said all that human ingenuity could devise about gray hair, next came bald heads; and here the orator, with laudable candour, proceeded to admit that baldness might, in one sense, be considered a defect. Nature had apparently intended that the human cranium should be covered with hair, and there was no denying that the integument was both useful and ornamental. I am not sure whether, at this stage of the argument, Mr. Burges took advantage of the opportunity of impressing the House with a due sense of the virtues of bear’s grease and macassar oil. I certainly remember anticipating an episode on nightcaps and Welsh wigs, but, on these, the orator was unaccountably silent. He duly informed the House, however, that many of the greatest heroes and philosophers could boast little covering on their upper region. Aristotle was bald, and so was Julius Cæsar, &c. &c. &c.

‘ It was not till the subject of baldness had become so stale and flat, as it certainly was unprofitable, that the audience were introduced to the vulture, who was kept so long hovering over the head of Mr. Burges’s opponent, that one only felt anxious that he should make his pounce and have done with it. Altogether, to give the vulture---like the devil---his due, he was a very quiet bird, and more formidable from the offensive nature of his droppings, than any danger to be apprehended from his beak or claws. In truth, he did seem to be somewhat scurvily treated by the orator, who, after keeping him fluttering about the hall for some three hours, at last rather unceremoniously disclaimed all connexion with him, and announced that he---Mr. Burges---was “an eagle soaring in his pride of place, and, therefore, not by a moping owl to be hawked at, and killed!” This was too much for gravity; but, luckily, the day’s oration had reached its

termination, and the House broke up in a state of greater exhilaration, than could reasonably have been anticipated from the nature and extent of the infliction.'

Whatever may be thought of the eloquence of Mr. Burges, it will hardly be doubted by any one who has read the above extract, that our author is a most acute and especially candid and liberal critic. No wonder, that with so exquisite a sensibility to the proprieties and delicacies of social intercourse, he should claim the character of an arbiter of elegance, and undertake to sit in judgment upon the 'shadowy differences' between the forms of civilization in the various regions of Christendom. What unpardonable sin the distinguished Representative of Rhode Island has committed, that has drawn down upon him this tremendous visitation, (which of course he cannot hope to survive) we are not informed. Probably the head and front of his offending is, that he has the misfortune to differ in opinion from the author of Cyril Thornton upon the question of the expediency of a legislative protection for domestic industry. Mr. Cambreleng, on the other hand, by happening to agree with him upon that point, rises at once to the rank of 'a gentleman of great talent, and decidedly the first political economist in the country.'

The remarks on the character and eloquence of Mr. Webster, though strongly tinged with the silly affectation in style to which we have adverted, are conceived in a better spirit, as regards the subject, and we extract them with pleasure, as one of the few passages that do some credit to the discernment and feelings of the author.

'The person, however, who has succeeded in rivetting most strongly the attention of the whole Union, is undoubtedly Mr. Webster. From the Gulf of St. Lawrence to that of Mexico, from Cape Sable to Lake Superior, his name has become, as it were, a household word. Many disapprove his politics, but none deny his great talents, his unrivalled fertility of argument, or his power, even still more remarkable, of rapid and comprehensive induction. In short, it is universally believed by his countrymen, that Mr. Webster is a great man; and in this matter I certainly make no pretension to singularity of creed. Mr. Webster is a man of whom any country might well be proud. His knowledge is at once extensive and minute, his intellectual resources very great; and, whatever may be the subject for discussion, he

is sure to shed on it the light of an active, acute, and powerful mind.

‘I confess, however, I did meet Mr. Webster under the influence of some prejudice. From the very day of my arrival in the United States, I had been made involuntarily familiar with his name and pretensions. Gentlemen sent me his speeches to read. When I talked of visiting Boston, the observation uniformly followed, “Ah! there you will see Mr. Webster.” When I reached Boston, I encountered condolence on all hands. “You are very unfortunate,” said my friends, “Mr. Webster set out yesterday for Washington.” Whenever, at Philadelphia and Baltimore, it became known that I had visited Boston, the question, “Did you see Mr. Webster?” was a sequence as constant and unvarying as that of the seasons.

‘The result of all this was, that the name of Webster became invested in my ear with an adventitious cacophony. It is not pleasant to admire upon compulsion, and the very pre-eminence of this gentleman had been converted into something of a bore. To Washington, however, I came, armed with letters to the unconscious source of my annoyance. The first night of my arrival I met him at a ball. A dozen people pointed him out to my observation, and the first glance rivetted my attention. I had never seen any countenance more expressive of intellectual power.

‘The forehead of Mr. Webster is high, broad, and advancing. The cavity beneath the eyebrow is remarkably large. The eye is deeply set, but full, dark, and penetrating in the highest degree; the nose prominent, and well defined; the mouth marked by that rigid compression of the lips by which the New Englanders are distinguished. When Mr. Webster’s countenance is in repose, its expression struck me as cold and forbidding, but in conversation it lightens up; and when he smiles, the whole impression it communicates is at once changed. His voice is clear, sharp, and firm, without much variety of modulation; but when animated, it rings on the ear like a clarion.

‘As an orator, I should imagine Mr. Webster’s forte to lie in the department of pure reason. I cannot conceive his even attempting an appeal to the feelings. It could not be successful; and he has too much knowledge of his own powers to encounter failure. In debate his very countenance must tell. Few men would hazard a voluntary sophism under the glance of that eye, so cold, so keen, so penetrating, so expressive of intellectual power. A single look would be enough to wither up a whole volume of bad logic.

‘In the Senate, I had, unfortunately, no opportunity of hearing Mr. Webster display his great powers as a debater. During

my stay, the subjects on which he happened to speak were altogether of inferior interest. In the Supreme Court he delivered several legal arguments, which certainly struck me as admirable, both in regard to matter and manner. The latter was neither vehement nor subdued. It was the manner of conscious power, tranquil and self-possessed.

‘ Mr. Webster may be at once acquitted of all participation in the besetting sins of the orators of his age and country. I even doubt, whether, in any single instance, he can be fairly charged with having uttered a sentence of mere declamation. His speeches have nothing about them of gaudiness and glitter. Words with him are instruments, not ends; the vehicles, not of sound merely, but of sense and reason. He utters no periods full of noise and fury, like the voice of an idiot, signifying—nothing; and it certainly exhibits proof that the taste of the Americans is not yet irretrievably depraved, when an orator like Mr. Webster, who despises all the stale and petty trickery of his art, is called by acclamation to the first place.

‘ In conversation, Mr. Webster is particularly agreeable. It seems to delight him, when he mingles with his friends, to cast off the trammels of weighty cogitation, and merge the lawyer and the statesman in the companion;---a more pleasant and instructive one I have rarely known in any country. As a politician, the opinions of Mr. Webster are remarkably free from intolerance. His knowledge is both accurate and extensive. He is one of the few men in America who understand the British Constitution, not as a mere abstract system of laws and institutions, but in its true form and pressure, as it works and acts upon the people, modified by a thousand influences, of which his countrymen in general know nothing.

The censures, bestowed by our author upon the style of speaking which prevails in Congress, though ridiculously exaggerated, have some foundation in truth. While the leading orators in both Houses are quite equal or perhaps superior to the first in the British Parliament, the average is a good deal lower; in other words, there are more indifferent speeches in proportion to the good, precisely because there is a greater amount of speaking in proportion to the business done. In England, the debate on general questions is commonly left to some two or three of the leading members on each side. The others reserve themselves for local and particular questions, upon which they are particularly informed. Here, on the contrary, when a great question comes up, every gentleman, who can speak at all, seems to think

it necessary to declare his opinion at length. The reasons for this difference are sufficiently obvious, but it is equally so, that the British practice is more favourable to a prompt and intelligent despatch of business.

In connexion with the account of his visit to Washington, and in two or three other passages of his work, our author comments at some length, as we have already remarked, upon the principles and operation of the political institutions of the country. His conclusions are all unfavourable, but as the premises from which they are drawn are generally common-place, we really see no reason, why he should have thought it necessary to write a new book, for the purpose of bringing before the British public political views, which may be found about as well stated in every newspaper and review. His theory is, that a purely popular government is impracticable, especially one that involves the principle of universal suffrage, and that this is the rock upon which we must finally split:---that we go along very well at present, while the population is comparatively scanty, but that, when it becomes more dense the non-proprietors will take all the power into their own hands, abolish property, and throw the whole country into confusion. This result he considers not only as inevitable, but as not very distant, and as likely to occur within the period of the present or next generation.

As there is no novelty in these objections, so the answer which, as our author says, was made to them repeatedly by intelligent gentlemen with whom he conversed upon this subject, is equally familiar, and to our minds perfectly satisfactory, although it failed to clear up the doubts of the worthy traveller. The 'general answer is,' he says, 'that the state of things which I have ventured to describe is very distant. It is enough for each generation to look to itself, and we leave it to our descendants some centuries hence, to take care of their interests as we do of ours. We enjoy all manner of freedom and security under our present institutions, and really feel very little concern about the evils that may afflict our posterity.' To us, we must confess, this language appears to be conformable, not merely to practical good sense, but to the soundest and deepest theories of political science. The best government for every community is that which is best adapted to its actual condition, and if the one best adapted to its actual condition be also the one actually established

and in operation, it would seem to be the height of madness to make complaint, or to wish for a change. Now it is fully admitted by our author, that the present constitution is the one best adapted to the actual condition of the United States; he goes farther even, and admits with emphasis,---how consistently with many observations in other parts of the work, it is not for us to say,---that if the present constitution could be maintained, it would be the best of all possible governments. ‘At present, the United States are perhaps more safe from revolutionary contention, than any other country in the world, but this safety consists in one circumstance alone. *The great majority of the people are possessed of property*: have what is called a stake in the hedge; and are therefore by interest opposed to all measures, which may tend to its insecurity. It is for such a condition of society that the present constitution was framed; and *could this great bulwark of government be considered as permanent as it is effective, there could be no assignable limit to the prosperity of a people, so favoured.*’ The result is, then, upon the statements and admissions of our author himself, that we have in operation in this country the form of government which, abstractedly considered, is the best of all possible forms, and which is at the same time the one best adapted to our actual condition. Is not this enough? It really seems to us, that a government which can with truth be so described, is precisely the *beau ideal*, upon which the patriot in every country should fix his eye as the perfect,---though perhaps in his own case unattainable,---model; and that the country, in which it is actually established and in full operation, has nothing more in this respect to wish or hope. To obtain a form of government well adapted to their actual condition, and at the same time making some distant approach to those which appear most plausible in theory, has been heretofore the highest attainment of the most favoured communities,---we had almost said the limit of their ambition. In our particular case, by an extraordinary concurrence of favourable circumstances, the best possible form of government is also the one best adapted to the actual condition of the people, and, what is of still more importance, the one actually established. Such, we say, are the admissions of the author: and if this state of things do not satisfy him, we can only say that he is even more fastidious on the subject of political institutions, than he is on the higher

matters of the mode of eating eggs and the *tournure* of the New York ladies.

But, he says, this state of things cannot last. An unfavourable change in the condition of the people is inevitable: the non-proprietors must in the course of time become the majority. What then? Admit that all this is true: that a change in the condition of the people will have taken place before the year 2000, and that a form of government different from the one now established will be better adapted to that state of things, than the present one. Does it therefore follow, that we are now to destroy our present government and institute the other? Does not our author perceive, that for the very reason that the latter is better adapted to a different state of society, it is of course not so well adapted to the existing one? Suppose that it were supernaturally revealed to a person, standing firmly on both his legs at the age of twenty-one, that at the age of fifty he would fracture one of them and be obliged to have it amputated. He would no doubt regard this as a misfortune, but would he, as a prudent man, undertake to remedy the evil by sending for a surgeon and having one of his limbs amputated immediately? Would he act wisely to deprive himself of the use of a sound leg for thirty years, because a wooden one might after a certain period be better adapted to the existing state of his body, than one of his natural ones? This is a correct illustration of the course which appears to be recommended by our author, and which we certainly consider as most extraordinary. If we are destined to suffer an unfavourable change in our condition so much the worse. When the change comes, we or our descendants must meet it, as we or they best may. In the mean time, we are well, and very well. Policy, duty, and common sense demand of us to let very well alone.

If, as our author affirms, the present government of the United States be in theory the best of all possible systems, and be also the one best adapted to our present condition, it is of course absolutely and in all respects the best we could now have, whatever changes in it may hereafter be rendered necessary or expedient by changes in the state of the country. But, after all, how does it appear that the threatened unfavourable change in the state of the country is so inevitable as our author appears to suppose. In this, as in many other cases, the worthy traveller,

who is a little addicted to delivering oracles *ex cathedra*, has not condescended to give us very explicitly the reasons on which he founds his opinion. He tells us merely, that 'the population of the United States doubles itself in about twenty-five years; that at this rate it will amount in half a century to fifty millions; that before that period, it is *very certain* that the pressure of the population on the means of subsistence, especially in the Atlantic States, will be great: that the price of labour will have fallen, while that of the necessities of life must be prodigiously enhanced; that the poorer and more suffering class will want the means of emigrating to a distant region of unoccupied territory; that poverty and misery will be abroad, and that the great majority of the people will be without property of any kind, except the thews and sinews with which God has endowed them.' Why or how all this is so *very certain*, he does not say, and as the burden of proof rests upon himself, he has of course failed in sustaining his position. This is all which, for the purpose of refuting his theory, it would be necessary for us to add upon the subject. Before he can reasonably expect us to abolish the best of all possible governments, and substitute a confessedly inferior one, he is bound, not merely to assert, but to prove to us, that the change in our condition, which would, according to him, render such a proceeding expedient, is likely to occur. We may add, however, that his conclusions as to the probable state of things half a century hence,—however certain he may think them,—are directly in the teeth of the experience of the last two centuries. During that time, population has regularly advanced at a rate on the average considerably more rapid than the one he states as probable in future, but is so far from pressing on the means of subsistence that the necessities and comforts of life were never so abundant as they are at this moment,—that the price of labour never was so high;—that emigration is checked, not because the poorer classes want the means of emigrating, but because their labour is in such demand that they are under no temptation to go elsewhere;—that poverty and misery are hardly known; and that the majority of the people are all,—as he himself says,—in possession of more or less property. Why this is so, is just as evident as the fact is certain. The progress of population naturally brings with it the division of labour and the

improved methods of applying it, which of course render it more productive, and reward the labourer with a greater amount of the necessities and comforts of life. No sufficient or even plausible reason can be given, why the same process should not continue for the two next centuries, that has been going on for the two last. The history of what is, as a French writer very justly remarks, is the history of what has been and what is to be. For ourselves, we are quite as confident as our author professes himself to be of the contrary, that so far as the progress of population alone is concerned, and leaving out of view all other circumstances, the changes that are likely to occur in the state of the country will be for the better, and not for the worse: that for this and the two next centuries, the comforts and necessities of life will be more abundant, in proportion to the numbers of the people than they are now;—the price of labour higher;—emigration less considerable;—poverty and misery less frequent;—and the majority of the people better off in the way of property. Whether other circumstances of an unfavourable character may not occur during that period, that will counteract wholly or in part these results, is a different question, and one which we need not examine for the purpose of the present argument, since our author rests his case entirely on the supposed unfavourable effect of the single cause, to which we have alluded.

The views of our author, upon the general principles of the political institutions of the United States, are therefore entirely baseless and extravagant. His observations on particular points are hardly more correct, nor would it be easy to reconcile either the spirit of the details of the different passages in which they are respectively contained. After pronouncing, as we have seen, *ex cathedra*, that the Constitution is perfect, if it would only last, he finds, on examining the several parts in detail, hardly any thing to approve. The principle of elective magistracies is bad;—the shortness of the time for which the President is chosen is bad;—the exclusion of the Cabinet Secretaries from Congress is bad;—and, to pass over other minor points, in the opinion of this most intelligent and judicious observer, *the Union of the States is bad!!!* ‘The experiment of periodically electing the chief officer of the Commonwealth has been tried and failed. While confessing the grossness of the failure, many Americans would willingly attribute it to the injudicious

provisions for the collection of the national suffrage.' This interesting piece of information is,---as the newspapers say,--- 'important if true.' We had hitherto supposed, in the simplicity of our hearts, that the chief officer of the Commonwealth had been for half a century past elected in most of the States annually, in some every three or four years, and for the United States at large every four years, in such a way that the affair, instead of being, 'a gross and acknowledged failure,' had passed off on the whole to the general satisfaction. Within the limited compass of our observation, we have never happened to meet with an individual who wished the present system to be changed, or with any publication, recommending a mode of designating a chief magistrate, other than that of popular election. So far as the office of President of the United States is concerned, which our author appears to have had particularly in view, we had supposed it to be generally acknowledged, not that the experiment had failed, but that it had succeeded a good deal better than perhaps could reasonably have been expected. Of the seven Presidents, who have been elected under it, the six first, viz: Washington, the two Adamses, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe,---though certainly far from being on a level in point of qualifications for the office,---were all, by general acknowledgment, among the most eminent and best qualified persons in the country. Mr. Monroe, the least conspicuous of the number, is yet spoken of by our author, deservedly, in very handsome terms, and was as much superior to the hereditary rulers of the ordinary European standard, as Washington was to him. As to the qualifications of the present incumbent, which are still the subject of party controversy, there would no doubt be a difference of opinion. A large and respectable portion of the citizens who opposed his election would probably say, that in his case the system has in fact failed. But were this even admitted, it might still be pertinently asked, whether any system can be expected to produce the best possible results oftener than six times out of seven. On the other hand, the large majority of the citizens who elected General Jackson, look upon him as the very Phoenix of Presidents, and from the tone of our author's remarks upon the subject, we should have supposed that he inclined to this opinion. He certainly, if his account may be believed, 'retired from the interview he had with General Jackson,

with sentiments of very sincere respect for the intellectual and moral qualities of the American President.' We doubt whether he could have said as much as this, of a majority of the hereditary rulers of Europe. Add to this, that in the innumerable instances in which the same system has been applied in the several States, it has brought out, almost uniformly, men of great respectability,---often the very first men in the country, such as Jefferson, Dewitt Clinton, and Jay,---and in no one case, as far as we are informed, any person notoriously incapable. We cannot but think, that instead of having grossly failed, it must be regarded on the whole, as having in a remarkable manner succeeded. In fact, the capacity of the people at large to elect the principal political functionaries, is considered, by competent judges, as one of the least questionable points in the theory of government. Montesquieu, at least as high an authority on a political question as the author of Cyril Thornton, tells us that 'the people are admirably well qualified to elect those who are to be entrusted with any portion of their power. If there were a doubt of this, we need only to recollect the continual succession of astonishing elections that were made by the Athenians and the Romans, which certainly cannot be attributed to chance.* The history of the United States, so far as we have proceeded, will be regarded by future political philosophers, as furnishing another example, not less striking than those of Athens and Rome.

While, in one part of his work, our author pronounces the Constitution to be the best of all possible governments, if it could but last, and in another finds fault with almost every important provision, he finally tells us in a third, with great frankness, that he does not know what it is. *The difficulty of understanding the Federal Constitution*, is the running title of one of his pages, and in the text beneath it he remarks, that 'of the Federal Government it is difficult to speak with any precision, because it is difficult to ascertain with any precision the principles on which it is founded.' If he had had the good sense to wait till he did understand it before he wrote upon it, he would have spared himself much trouble, and the world a very useless and mischievous book. In connection with this remark, he introduces the opinion alluded to above, that the Union of

* Spirit of Laws. Book 2. Chap. 2.

the States is a bad thing, which he develops in a passage occupying two or three pages, under the running title of *The Disadvantages of the Union*. These supposed disadvantages appear to resolve themselves into this: that it is difficult for States, having different climates and productions'—some growing cotton, rice, tobacco, and sugar, and others wheat and maize, —some agricultural, some manufacturing, and some commercial,—to reconcile their adverse interests, so as to go along comfortably together under the same government as members of one body politic. It did not occur to the worthy traveller, that the precise circumstance, of a difference in productions and occupations, constitutes a unity instead of a diversity of interest,—that the opposition of interest is between different persons engaged in the same occupations,—and that for South Carolina and Massachusetts to quarrel because one raises cotton and the other manufactures, it would be, as the late Mr. Dexter very properly remarked, about as reasonable as for two persons of different sexes to quarrel about the difference in their physical conformation. But without undertaking to refute these crude objections, it may be sufficient to remark that our author's doubts about the advantages of the Union afford the strongest proof, which he could possibly have given, how little he in fact understands the Federal Constitution or any of the political institutions of the country. To those who possess any tolerably correct notions on these subjects, it is superfluous to say that the great idea of the Union of the States is, in substance, the whole Federal Constitution:—the particulars, excepting so far as they affect the existence or non-existence of this vital principle, are mere matters of form. Differences of opinion about the construction of the instrument, with the same exception, are comparatively unimportant. The right claimed by South Carolina to annul the Constitution and laws at discretion, comes, of course, within the exception, and has fortunately been put down by the unanimous acclamation of the whole country; but, as to the other points upon which differences of opinion have existed, such as whether the General Government has or has not a right, under the Constitution, to establish a bank or a national university, to lay out new roads and make other internal improvements, and so forth,—the importance of their being decided in one way or another is like dust in a ba-

lance, compared with that of the great principle of the Constitution, a real and effective union of the States for all purposes of foreign and international concern. This is the prominent, all-important, we had almost said only important feature in our political institutions; and it is therefore not to be wondered at that an observer, who considers the Union as an evil, should be at a loss to understand the nature and operation of the Government. On this subject, as on the one to which we before alluded, the true doctrine was explained to him in this country, but seems to have been lost upon him, although it is textually set down with great candor in his book. He is of the class of persons foretold in Scripture, who, hearing, were to hear, but not understand. In answer to this crude and puerile objection to the policy of the Union, he was told at Washington by a distinguished member of the House of Representatives, in strong and rather coarse language, provoked probably by his impertinence, that 'the Union was necessary to prevent us from cutting one anothers' throats. This is the conclusion of the whole matter in a nut-shell. If our author had possessed wit enough to comprehend the meaning of this brief oracle, which is yet not very obscure, he would have gone home a wiser man than he came, and have written a much better book than he has done. The Union relieves our great and growing family of independent States from the curse of continual war, which has always desolated Europe, and secures to them, in actual reality, what has been often regarded as the golden dream of visionary speculators,---PERPETUAL PEACE. This single advantage puts a new face upon the whole political condition of the country. The continual recurrence of wars with other neighboring states, ---the necessity of providing for them and carrying them on with efficiency,---the consequences that naturally result from them,---are the causes, that have mainly determined the form of the government in every other nation of which we know the history. The preliminary establishment on this continent of the opposite principle of union and perpetual peace, not only 'prevents us from cutting each others' throats,'---not only relieves us from the destruction of life and property incident to war,---but enables us to simplify our political machinery, and to go along quietly and prosperously under institutions, which in a different state of things would be impracticable. It has

been said by some indiscreet citizens, in the course of the late controversies, that the true motto of the patriot is *Liberty first and Union afterwards*, but the truth is, that the preliminary existence of the Union is the necessary condition of the liberty we enjoy. It is owing to the Union and the permanent internal peace consequent upon it, that we are able to combine a complete security for personal rights with an extension of the sphere of individual action, and a contraction of that of government, greater than were ever imagined possible before. Abolish the Union,---introduce,---what would necessarily follow,---a system of permanent war among the States, instead of the existing one of permanent peace,---and you introduce, of course, the vast military establishments, the triumphant military leaders, the intolerable burdens, and the *passive obedience*, which regularly accompany the train of that great scourge of the human race. Universal suffrage,---elective magistracies,---representative assemblies, the liberty of speech, the press and public worship,---trial by jury,---would of course disappear at once. We hold these, and all the other personal and political privileges of which we are so justly proud, simply and solely on the condition of maintaining the Union.

The Union of the States is therefore the Alpha and Omega, ---the A. B. C. and X. Y. Z.---the beginning, middle and end, ---the all in all,---of our political institutions. A writer, who professes to consider it as an evil, only shows that he has not obtained the most remote insight into their true principles and character. After mentioning the answer given to him by 'the distinguished Representative' as above quoted, he adds, that 'if the Union be as important as it appears to be considered in the United States, it were to be wished that it were more likely to endure;' and predicts, no doubt with great regret, that 'the federal Constitution, like other bubbles, is at any time liable to burst, when the world will discover that its external glitter covered nothing but wind.' We are glad,---so far as our humble judgment can be supposed to have any weight with so great a personage,---to assure him that the Union is in no danger. The experience of the last year has done much to confirm the assurance of its long duration, which the soundest thinkers have always felt from a consideration of the circumstances of the country. The Federal Constitution is not, as our author

supposes, a glittering bubble, covering nothing but wind, and liable to burst at any moment. It is the beautiful and well-proportioned form, belonging by nature to a living, substantial, powerful, active and healthy political body. To destroy it would be just about as practicable, as to tear off the integuments from the frame of a living man: the operation could in either case only be effected by the complete destruction of life. The States are not only formally and by compact, but naturally and substantially, *ONE PEOPLE*. They are, with slight and unimportant circumstances of exception, one in their origin; one by their geographical position and frequent relations; one by their community of manners, language, laws and religion. These,---whatever our author may think of it,---are not airy nothings, like the wind that inflates a bubble, but substantial realities. They *naturally* carry with them the political unity of the communities among which they exist; and what nature,---God,---has united, man *cannot* put asunder. It is not merely impolitic and inexpedient, but impossible permanently to separate the States. If, by any accidental convulsion, (and such an event is hardly within the compass of contingencies,) they should be temporarily separated, they would rush together again immediately, perhaps under a different form of union---with a wholly irresistible force of attraction. To attempt to break up the Union by ordinances and speeches in Convention, ---the 'paper bullets of the brain,'---is like launching one of our author's glittering bubbles in the face of a strong northeaster. Every new rail road,---every additional steamboat, as it takes up its long line of march down the mighty Mississippi, ---does more to strengthen the bonds of the Union, than all the speeches that have ever been made against it have done to weaken them. The very newspaper, in which such sentiments are contained, is itself an antidote to the poison it diffuses.

But this is not the time nor the place for a full development of this interesting topic. Our readers are already as much fatigued with our observations upon our author, as we are with his upon the country, and it is necessary to bring them to a close. If there be anywhere an appearance of asperity in our language, we trust that it will be considered as fully justified by the extracts we have given, and especially the outrageous and wholly inexcusable attack upon the gray hairs of Mr.

Burges. We cannot conclude without repeating the expression of our regret, at this new example of narrow-mindedness, prejudice and malignity, in the judgments of British travellers upon this country. To every impartial observer, it is apparent that in the order of Providence a great work is in progress here, which is destined to figure hereafter in the rolls of history as one of the most remarkable achievements of the Genius of Civilization. A field has been opened, upon which the intelligence and refinement of a highly cultivated portion of our race may operate without the political restraints which have generally accompanied a great intellectual and moral improvement in the state of society. A numerous and continually increasing cluster of neighboring States have substituted, as the principle of their mutual relations, perpetual peace for perpetual war. The result of the concurrence of these auspicious circumstances has been almost magical. The whole continent is like a vast bee-hive, instinct throughout with life, motion and a joyous activity. Cities,---empires,---(Lowell, Ohio,---our whole Western Paradise justify the statement) rise from the bosom of the earth like exhalations. The wilderness blossoms like the rose; the very rocks and sand-banks (witness Nantucket,---witness all New England,) pour forth products more rich and abundant, than any that ever came from the gold and diamond mines of Peru and Golconda. New forms of government, that had hitherto been regarded as the visions of philosophic dreamers, too beautiful to be ever realized on this terrestrial sphere, are going on from year to year, in quiet and tranquil operation, in the full view of an astonished and admiring world. As a political power, the country has taken, at the outset of its course, its position among the leading States of Christendom; and the imagination is dazzled in looking forward to its future probable destinies. Such are the scenes, which the Western continent now presents to the eye of the philosophic traveller. If there be any thing to equal them in moral magnificence in the annals of the world, we confess that we have looked for it in vain. With prospects like these before them, it is painful,---it is pitiful,---to see a succession of observers, from the 'most thinking nation' in Europe, coming out, professedly on purpose to examine men and manners, and incapable of seeing or feeling any thing but some trifling and generally accidental

circumstance, that happens to interfere with their national prejudice or personal pride. The shopmen look too hardly at them;---the merchants refuse to learn Sanscrit of them;---their fellow-boarders eat eggs in a way to which they are not accustomed;---from all which it follows of course that the people are a race of *brutal barbarians*,---that the Union of the States is a *disadvantage*,---and the Constitution a *glittering bubble*. This is worse than the folly of the cobbler of Athens, who, when asked his opinion of a fine statue of Venus, which had just been exhibited, said that he had remarked nothing but a wrong stitch in one of the sandals. An Athenian blockhead, as was well observed by the sage of Bolt Court, is the worst of all blockheads; and truly the blockheads of the modern Athens appear to be determined not to yield the palm to their ancient prototypes.

The apparent motive of all this misrepresentation is even more revolting and ridiculous than the thing itself. If there be one among the achievements of the English nation, of which, more than any other, they have a right to be justly proud, it is the foundation of the great English empire that is now growing up on the western side of the Atlantic: yet of all the European travellers, the English alone are incapable of looking with the least complacency upon their own work. Prince Talleyrand, Baron Humboldt, Chateaubriand, Volney, the Duke de la Rochefoucault were certainly as competent judges of men and manners,---as well qualified to appreciate the value of political institutions,---as the Fauxes, the Fearons and the Trollopes, or even the Halls and the Hamiltons. All these, and a multitude of others of similar pretensions from the continent of Europe, who have published their observations upon the United States,---while they have pointed out, of course, what they regarded as objectionable,---appear to have received, on the whole, a favorable impression of the general aspect of society. But no sooner do the Chesterfields of Holborn and St. Giles,---the British Talleyrands of the sentry-box and ward-room---set foot upon our soil, than it changes at once to a wild and barren waste, the abode of nothing but rudeness, ignorance and barbarism. Let us hope, that after a while, and under happier auspices, some pilgrim from the mother country may arrive among us, with a view sufficiently

expansive to take in the wonders of improvement that are here in progress,---with a heart sufficiently English to rejoice in the achievements of Englishmen, without inquiring the degrees of latitude and longitude, or the year of grace in which they were performed,---and with a pen powerful enough to do justice to the subject. He might offer to his countrymen, as the result of his observations, a work more interesting and instructive than the celebrated *Germany* of Madame de Stael. Some approach to this was looked for at the hands of our author, as a person of established literary reputation. How miserably the expectation has been baulked, our readers have seen. The failure, though on many accounts much to be regretted, is a far more serious misfortune to him than to us. Another better qualified knight-errant will achieve the adventure, and carry off the prize. Perhaps we may finally owe to the graceful genius of some English De Stael the justice, which the men of the mother country have hitherto denied us, and which the daughter of Necker was the first to render to our kinsmen in Germany. In the mean time, we are doing very well,—have the world before us,—and can afford to wait. When Cardinal Fleury was Prime Minister of France, at the age of eighty-five, a young nobleman requested something of him, which his Eminence, being at the moment a little out of humor, was not inclined to grant. ‘Sir,’ said the Cardinal, ‘you shall never obtain what you want during my life time.’ *Monsieur*, replied the other, *j’attendrai*. ‘I will wait, my Lord.’

March, 1834.

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AMERICAN MORALS AND MANNERS.

WE propose to offer some observations in this essay on American morals and manners. There is, at this moment, a very extraordinary crisis of opinion in Europe with regard to this country. Our national character is not only brought into question, but it is brought into question as furnishing grounds for a decision upon the form of our Government, upon the great cause of Republican institutions.

For reasons, then, deeper than those which concern our national reputation,—and yet this is not indifferent,—this subject deserves attention. We have no desire to overrate the importance of this country; but it is undoubtedly the great embodiment of the leading principle on which the history of the world is to turn for many years to come. When at some future time a philosophical history of the present age shall be written, this country will occupy a place in it, the very converse of that which it now holds in the thoughts of most men in the Old World. That future time will far better understand the map of human affairs, not to say our literal geography, than does the present. It will be seen that the tree of freedom, planted on this Western continent, has shot its roots and fibres through the whole of Europe; beneath the soil of all her ancient and venerable institutions. Whether it shall stand and flourish and lend strength to the world; or whether, overturned by whelming floods, it shall draw the world down with it, or leave it rent and torn by the disruption of its ties—this is the question. We are not to be told that we are now speaking great words with little meaning. Those ties, we affirm, exist. The humbler classes in Europe may know definitely but little about us. But from out of this unknown world, from beyond the dim and spreading curtain of the sea, has come to them a story that they will never forget. They have heard first of a people who can

eat the fruit of an untailed soil, of their own soil; and we can testify from observation, that that word, *ownership*, is like a word of magic to them. They have heard, next, of a people who can read; to whom is unrolled the mysterious page of knowledge, the lettered wisdom of all mankind. Yes, and they are demanding and gaining that boon, that American privilege, from their own Governments. They have heard, once more, of a people, who are their own governors, who make their own laws and execute them, and whom no man with impunity can wrong or oppress. Yes, in the lowliest cabins of Europe, they have learned all this. Let all the crowned powers of the world unteach it, if they can. This is no dream to them; it is a fact. There is example for it. And this one example is of more weight than all the books of theory that have been written from the time of Plato to this day.

The great controversy of the age, we have said in a former essay, is the controversy about freedom. To put it in a more exact and practical form, it is a question about Government. How men shall govern themselves, or whether they can govern themselves at all, or, in other words, by what forms they are best governed; this is the question. And it is a momentous question. A good-natured easiness, or philosophic indifference upon this point; the sage dictum—of Dr. Johnson or of any body else—that happiness is about the same under all governments; we cannot understand at all. We know that there are deeper things than Government, affecting men's welfare; but we say, this, nevertheless, affects it. Nay, and it has an influence, in many ways, upon those deeper things—sentiments, morals, modes of thought, views of life, the cheerfulness and hopefulness of life. If "oppression makes a wise man mad," it often makes a whole people worse than mad—unprincipled, immoral, and stupid or frivolous. If a single bad man in high station may corrupt many, what extended and blighting shadow over a country must be cast by the enthroned image of wrong! It dishonours and degrades, it vexes and demoralizes a people. Besides, Government either helps or hinders individual development. It expands or contracts the whole man; for it touches his freedom, education, religion. It concerns not only the man's virtue, but the man's manhood. Unless we were to say, as we might more justly, that virtue, rightly construed, *is* the manhood of man.

From these reasons, as well as from man's natural right to be free, has arisen the conviction in all liberal and generous minds, that the freest Government, compatible with human safety, is to be preferred to all others.

Now of such a Government, the *freest* in the world at least, America has given an example. The eyes of the world were directed to it. Could it succeed? If it could, it was virtually an answer to every argument for political wrong; for absolute monarchy, for primogeniture, for legitimacy in all its forms. Could it succeed? More than sixty years of success it has counted; no nation on earth has been in a happier condition, none more flourishing in affairs, more correct in morals, more submissive to law, or more loyal to its government. Sixty, nay, nearly seventy years have passed over a nation, experiencing, meanwhile, all the vicissitudes of peace and war, and of commercial prosperity and adversity, and still it has a being; it has not faded away like a Utopian dream from these blessed shores; it is no mushroom empire; it stands firm and strong. And yet now, at this late hour, all at once, this experiment is distrusted and discredited throughout the whole of Europe.

It is certainly a very remarkable crisis in public opinion, and, on every account, demands attention. If this present distrust is a mere freak or whim of the public mind, that character should be fixed upon it. If it arises from misapprehension, the error should be promptly exposed. If there are any just grounds for it, most especially does it concern us in America to know it.

Let us then look carefully into the case of America, with reference to this distrust. What are the grounds of it? And how far are they sustained, if they are sustained at all, by the facts? What is there in this American nation—a great nation; consisting of many millions of people; prosperous, peaceful, happy; free, powerful, and respectable, we hope—what is there that justifies any alarmist, any croaker, in saying that the great experiment of this people in government is coming to nought, or that can warrant foreign writers, who should feel that they have a reputation to preserve, in speaking of this country in terms of gross indignity and ribald scorn?

The first charge that we shall examine, since at present it stands foremost of all, is that of the repudiation of public debts.

It is not easy to understand the feeling of all Europe on this point, without coming into actual contact with it. On a late visit to the Old World, we were amazed to observe the length to which this charge of repudiation is carried. Perpetually, without one single exception among all the persons who addressed us, we were approached with an air and tone of sympathy for the sad case of America. The conversation usually ran in this manner:—"A terrible thing this, in America!" "What thing?" we said. "Why, this repudiation, you know." "But who has repudiated?" "Who? Why! the States, all the States, or the most of them; it is the doctrine now in America." "Nay, sir," was our reply, "let us understand this matter, if you please, before we proceed any farther. We say that the States have not repudiated their debts. We say that there is no such thing as repudiation in America, except in regard to limited portions of the debts of two of the States where the just obligation to pay is denied. Michigan alleges, that as certain monies which she proposed to borrow, never found their way into her treasury, she is not obliged in good faith to reimburse the lender. Mississippi contends, that she is not legally nor honestly bound to pay certain bonds, because they were sold and were bought in known violation of the very condition on which they were issued. We do not say that these are sufficient grounds of defence. We think that the acts of the authorized agents of a State should bind the State. But still we say, that neither of these is an act of open, unblushing repudiation. There is no such thing in America. We believe, there never can be. It is a case, not of repudiation, but of simple bankruptcy. The States cannot pay at present; is that a crime?" "But they can pay," was the reply often made. "They can lay a direct tax, for the purpose of paying the interest at least. Or, at any rate, they could come forward and relieve the public mind by saying that they acknowledge their liability, and mean in due time to meet it. They knew that suspicions were flung upon their good faith, and they have done nothing to remove them." "Consider," we said in reply, "how little the mass of the people are apt to feel themselves implicated in the acts of the Government. They hear that there is a deficit in the treasury; they suppose that it will be supplied in some way, without ever suspecting that their honour is compromised or that their intervention is necessary. Nor does it

materially alter the case, that ours is a republican or representative government. It is a way of thinking that long since came into the world, with regard to the action of all Governments. The public conscience does not feel itself responsible for the acts or neglects of Government. We wish it did, among ourselves. We are willing to hear anything that tends to elevate the public conscience. And in this view, we could wish that either of the two things before suggested had been done; that is to say, either that the voice of the people had demanded a direct tax, or a most open and formal profession of a purpose to pay. But the question now is, Does the failure to do one or the other of these things indicate a want of principle among the people, a willingness that the debt should never be paid? Would any other people have aroused themselves—the English or the French—to meet a case like this? Would they not have said, ‘The government will provide; the thing will right itself in due time?’ Would not the affair have been a parcel of the national budget, rather than a part of the national conscience?”

We think indeed that the Governments of the delinquent States ought to have come forward in the late crisis, when their bonds were dishonoured in every market of the world, and to have said, “We hold the public faith and honour to be sacred, and we firmly believe and fully intend that these debts shall be paid.” This the suffering bond-holders had a right to demand, at the least; and they did demand it. They said, and they still say, “You cannot pay; be it so; you say that you cannot lay a direct tax to pay the interest on these bonds; that it is a time of universal and unparalleled distress in your country; that the people of the delinquent States have land, have wheat, have everything but money: be it so; but yet *say* something to us; say that you mean to pay; that will satisfy us for the present; that will relieve the panic which is sweeping down us and our families by hundreds, to poverty and misery.” Why did not the State authorities in question meet this call? Why do they not meet it now? We ask this question with unspeakable concern and pain. We can conceive of no answer to it that ought to satisfy anybody. It must be want of care, of courage, or of principle. That it should be want of principle; that our public functionaries are willing violaters of their plighted faith, sworn oath-breakers,—we choose to consider, and we do consider, impossible. A

carelessness, we conceive—a feeling of not being responsible, too apt to be the feeling of public men, in distinction from that of private men, and increased here by constant rotation in office—the feeling, in short, which says, “*I did not borrow this money, and I am no more responsible in regard to it than every man around me;*” all this may be the explanation, in part, of this great neglect, as it seems to us, of public duty. It is very well known that, in England as well as in America, successive administrations do not feel responsible for the acts of the last, as if they were their own. It is very easy to see that if our States had, each of them, a permanent head—a prince or king—the sense of responsibility in such a crisis would be far more binding.

Still we must confess that this reasoning, though it may explain something, is, in such a case, by no means satisfactory. But is this enough even to explain the case? Must there be something more? Can it be that our State authorities have distrusted the honesty of the people; have doubted whether in the simple admission that the debt is binding, they would be supported by public sentiment; have feared, that if they spoke the honest word, they should lose their dishonest places? Then, before Heaven do we say it, we believe, that they do not *know* the people whom they canvass! It is not true that the people of this country, if the honest part were truly placed before them, would reject it. It cannot, it shall not, it must not, be true. In strict faith and conscience, we believe it is not. If we thought it were, if we ever were brought to that terrible conclusion, if we believed this nation to be a false and dishonest nation, we should fold our arms in despair; we should lift our eyes to heaven, and say, “God! give us another country! We have no country; give us some far land, some distant shore, where faith is kept and truth abides; for we have no more a country!” We trust we shall be believed when we say, that this is no language of rhetoric. It has been lately said in a printed letter, that “*Indiana will certainly repudiate.*” We do not believe it. But if it were true, hopelessly true, and if we were a citizen of Indiana, we would leave that State without delay. We would not breathe its air one moment beyond the time that we had power to leave it.

We can believe that this is a subject on which the public conscience is not yet sufficiently aroused, without losing

our confidence in the people. We can believe that the public mind is, to some degree, sophisticated on this subject. There have been some novel speculations spread among the people, designed to show that governments have no right to contract debts; that the present generation has no right to bind the future; and much has been made in Europe of the circumstance, that one of the public functionaries of the State of New York has lent his countenance to such a doctrine; a doctrine, which, whether true or false, becomes, at any rate, dishonest, the moment it is made to apply to debts already contracted. There is a feeling, too, among the people that these debts have been rashly contracted; that the public works on which these loans have been expended, are of little or no service to them; that millions have been thrown away upon useless canals, and that it is hard they should now be heavily taxed for these bootless enterprises. Add to this, the general feeling of irresponsibleness for what the Government does; and it is easy to see in what a different light this case may present itself, from that of direct personal liability.

It is not strange, perhaps, that the creditor in Europe does not, or will not, see this difference. He addresses the State that is indebted to him—Pennsylvania, for instance—just as if it were a private individual.* He says, “You can pay; you are rich at this moment; you can pay; you will not pay; you are revelling in ‘the luxury of dishonesty;’ you never will pay.” He feels disposed, if he meets a Pennsylvanian at dinner in London, to seize upon him, strip him, and in a sort of symbolical retaliation to divide his apparel among the guests; his coat to one, his boots to another, and his watch to a third. If anybody wants the benefit of this lash, let them have it. If this irony can do any good, let it, in Heaven’s name! But still, we must say, that it is more amusing than reasonable. Suppose the Affghan people should retort in this way upon the Reverend satirist—could they catch him—because his *Government* had done them some harm. Suppose the Chinese should smother him in a chest of opium, because his people persisted in smuggling the article into their country. Nay, and we cannot quite admire the taste with which these English writers come forth to teach and reprimand this country—something as if they had birch in hand for this great repub-

* See the Letters of the Reverend Sydney Smith.

lican boy on the other side of the water. But to be serious ; is all this wise or just ? Multitudes in Pennsylvania, and in all the indebted States, are most anxious that this matter should be fairly adjusted. But they find that this cannot be done in a moment. A whole people must be aroused to the payment of a government debt. Such a thing was never done before in the world ; and we doubt whether it *can* be done anywhere else. We doubt whether the public debt of England would stand the tide of universal suffrage a single day. Be that as it may ; here is a Pennsylvanian—let us suppose—labouring and hoping and believing that all may be brought right. In the meantime would the Reverend accuser have him eaten up at a dinner in London ? We cannot sympathize with his wit. With us it is a matter too great and grave to raise a laugh about. We are sorry for his anger too ; for it has certainly cost him sixty per cent. on his investment. He says he has sold his stock at forty per cent. He says it, as if he had washed his hands of it. “Haste makes waste.” If he had waited a little, he might have had a hundred.

At the same time we freely say that to any, not petulant but calm and solemn remonstrance of this gentleman, whose talent we admire, whose writings we delight in, we would give all the aid in our humble power. We do not regret that he should use his powerful pen to awaken the public conscience in this country. We would that many pens should be employed in this cause. Yes, and with all our heart, let them point to that magnificent State of Pennsylvania,—key-state she is called—key-state she is ; and never did more depend on her than now ! There is a voice from her western border which has thrilled through the hearts of thousands—the noble manifesto of the Pittsburg “Franklin Association.” Honour and success to it. Let the capital answer to that voice ! Let the river echo to the mountains, that great motto—“Franklin and Honesty !” We would, indeed, there were public meetings called in all our cities to consider this solemn crisis in our national morals, to pour out eloquent indignation upon the bare thought of public delinquency ; to do all that is possible to wipe off the dishonour that is cast upon us in the face of all Europe !

There is, in fact, an effort to be made in this country, of which we think our people are not yet fully aware. This matter of our public indebtedness must not be left to take

care of itself. The country must be aroused. It must come to be distinctly understood, that here is no ordinary work to be done. A whole people must be brought to feel the obligation of a public engagement. We have assigned some reasons to show why this does not come home to the private and individual conscience. But it must be brought home there. Our only help lies in individual conviction. Every merchant, every mechanic, every farmer, must be made to feel that this obligation presses like a private debt upon his warehouse, his workshop, his land. The truth is, a new kind of national conscience is to be called into being here. The people of these States, paying immense debts, which press upon them in the form of government loans, paying them by a voluntary effort, as they will do, will present a moral spectacle never before seen in the world. The principle that will do this, lies, we firmly believe, in the heart of these communities; but it is to be quickened into life, and roused into action. And this *must* be done. We must not admit nor consent that anything else is possible. Shall the blight of bad faith be upon our fields, and streams, and mountains, as an everlasting curse and shame? Shall this canker be suffered to remain in the very root of all our prosperity and hope? Shall this terrible precedent stand in the national history of millions of free, prosperous, and intelligent people? Shall this be the heritage of dishonour that is to go down from us to our posterity? And shall the nations as they pass by our borders say, "Alas! these are the people that talked of liberty and justice and human rights; but they never paid their debts?" Heaven forbid! We neither admit, nor consent, nor believe that this is possible!

The second charge brought against us, is that of an excessive and demoralizing love and pursuit of gain.

To meet the full extent of the distrust that is felt of this country and of its institutions on pecuniary grounds, it is necessary to take a larger view than that of temporary repudiation. There are other accusations connected with this larger view. It is said that the entire national mind of this country is corrupted by the pursuit of wealth; that in the absence of hereditary distinctions, this is the main title to consideration among us, and that to gain it, has become the one passion of our people; that from this cause has come in a flood of bankruptcies, failures, frauds; that

we have become the most dishonest people in the world; and in fine, that our great political experiment is wrecked upon a rock of gold;—or rather, of what we thought was gold, but which has turned out to be no better than worthless slate.

Let us observe in passing, that the failure of the United States Bank, being, as it was strictly after the withdrawal of the national charter, a private corporation, no more involves the moral credit of our people, than the failure of a bank at Leeds or Manchester does that of the English people. But let us proceed to the general allegation.

That, as a people at large, we are a money-seeking people beyond all others, we do not deny. That the pursuit of property carries us too far, and is the cause of many mistakes and evils among us, we do not deny. But with regard to the opprobrium attached to this national trait, we must ask for some candid reflection.

It must be remembered then, that there never was a people to whom the paths of acquisition were so widely opened as the people of this country. In Europe, entail on the land and capital in the manufactories, hold the mass of property from general possession. The labouring classes, generally, are tenants at will, or toilers for a bare subsistence. To have a competence, an independence however humble, is a thing entirely beyond their reach and thought. In this country, this boon, or the hope of it at least, is held out to all. Can it be expected that any people will be indifferent to such a blessing? We are not surprised that the first development of the unobstructed free principle is the eager pursuit of property. Noble ones are to follow, are following already; but it was natural, it was inevitable, that this should be the first. A man were a fool, and not a rational being, if, when the chance is offered him of providing for his own declining days or for the future wants of his family, he should fold his hands in transcendental wisdom or plebeian stupidity, and say that he did not care for property.

Nor do we admit all that is charged, of bad consequences from the pursuit of worldly goods. We will come in a moment to our late commercial disasters. But first we deny in general, that the common possession of this great heritage of opportunity, has had the effect alleged, to vulgarize, degrade and corrupt the public mind. This wide diffusion of property tends to make a generous people.

We certainly are not a hoarding people. Our expenditures are free enough in all conscience, we need not say; but we must say, since we are put upon this ungrateful argument, that our charities too are free. And we wish that our British accusers in particular, would think now and then, amidst their reproaches, of the thousands and ten thousands of their own poor, whom we annually relieve. They come in shoals every week, every day, to our shores; sometimes, we are told, actually shipped off from the alms-houses of England in utter helplessness by the public authorities; they crowd our own alms-houses; they besiege our doors in all the cities of our sea-board; and we verily believe that, in the long run, we are to give to the poor of Great Britain more than the amount of all the debts we owe her! We *can* do it; and a good many things more; and pay the debt besides; and *shall*—such is our assured faith.

But again, we doubt whether the eagerness for gain, though circumstances have made it more general here, is, by any means, so intense as it is in the higher circles of Europe. There is nothing here to compare with the rigid grasp of entail; with the inhumanity, the unnatural cruelty and injustice, that looks around upon a circle of children alike loving and entitled to love, and says, “Penniless shall ye all be, but this, my eldest; dependent shall ye all be upon him; in order that our family may be great.” They say that we have no birth-distinctions here to honour. But how long will the birth-distinction last without the wealth-distinction? The law of primogeniture answers. No, no; the great name must be graven on a plate of gold, or it will wear out. The possessors of rank will not be the men to set a light value upon the wealth that sustains it.

This close alliance, too, must give wealth, with the *mass of the people*, increased influence and power. And we verily believe, strange as the assertion may be thought, that opulence is a surer title to respect in Europe than it is in America. Besides its association with rank, it is a rarer thing there than it is here. And from both causes, it can surround itself with homages there, which here it would seek for in vain. We are *certain*, that the *poor* man in America stands a better chance of receiving the consideration and respect that are due to him, than in Europe. The Old World is full of arrangements that visibly assign to him an humbler place and accommodation. The forward deck

of steamboats is for him ; the second class of railroad cars ; the humble *fiacre* or *citadine* in the cities ; nay, the very streets tell the same tale. Till recently, in the cities of Europe the streets had no side-walks. But fifteen years ago, large quarters in Paris did not possess one side-walk. And the language of all this was as plain as if the words had been formed in the very paving-stones ; “these streets were built solely for the convenience of the rich who ride in carriages, and not for the poor who walk.” Yes, and the rapid increase of side-walks in the cities as plainly proclaims the onward march of more just and liberal principles. The barricades in Paris did not tell a plainer tale.

But let us come to the season of our late commercial disasters. This, in the view of many foreign observers, has plunged the moral and political hope of the country into utter ruin. Let us look at the case. In a thriving country, of vast and unexplored resources, amidst an enterprising population, to whose whole mass were opened the courses of boundless competition, there grew up gradually, from various causes, an honest conviction of the increased value of all property. We were living in a new age, in a new world, amidst new and untried fortunes ; prosperity, such as the world perhaps had never known, was pouring its treasures into the lap of peace ; human intelligence, aspiration, hope, were lifting their wings for an unbounded flight ; mechanism, more than realizing the fabled stories of giants and Titans, seemed about to break through the iron barriers of necessity, and to open the regions of some fairer and happier state of being. There were distinct causes, no doubt, of the wild speculations of 1835 and 1836, but we believe that the excited spirit of the age lent them a powerful impulse. At any rate, the impulse became general, became universal. We well remember how sage and cautious men held out against it for a time. We remember, too, how one after another fell in with it ; till at length all yielded to the tide of opinion, and were gazing unconcerned, if not actually swimming upon this vast and tremendous Maelstrom. Speculation became, in fact, a part of the regular and accredited business of the country. It was not like the mania about the South Sea and Mississippi stocks ; it was not the scheme of a few ; it did not wear an air of romance or phrenzy, which might well have put the prudent upon their guard ; it was the trade and traffic of the many. People honestly said, “we had not appre-

ciated the value of our property ; our houses, our lots and lands are, and are to be, worth more than we had thought ; how much we know not." Suppose, then, multitudes to have become honestly possessed with the conviction that they could make immense fortunes in a few years ; and see the unprecedented force of the temptation. The fact is, that no community on earth was ever subjected to anything like the same trial. Is it strange that many sunk under it ; that the sound old maxims of prudence were considered as superseded and to be laid aside ; that men took risks first, then involved themselves in embarrassments ; and that many, at last, fell into positive frauds ? There have been sad failures on every side ; not received with dishonest non-chalance, as our foreign traducers represent ; they little know the honourable minds to which they do this wrong. And there have been gigantic frauds, which have struck the heart of the whole community with salutary horror. All this we admit. But when we hear it said, " The great republican experiment has failed ;" we answer, No ; some banks, some houses, some individuals have failed, but the country has not failed ; the experiment has not failed ; the heart of the people is sound. In fact, when we speak of the whole community as engaged in the late hazardous courses of business, we speak, after all, only of the trading classes ; the people at large knew nothing about it. The body of farmers and mechanics was absolutely untouched by it. And we aver and we know, concerning our people at large, and that too from some minute knowledge and extensive comparison, that there is not a more honest and virtuous people on earth. We might say more ; for there is nothing among our people to compare with the small, paltry, perpetual deception, knavery and lying that one finds everywhere on the continent of Europe. We might say more then ; but thus much at least will we say ; for while, on the one hand, we have no taste for flattery, on the other, we will not give up our people to unjust reproach. Conceit may be bad, but discouragement is scarcely less so ; to submit passively to opprobrium is to go half-way towards deserving it ; and at any rate, what we desire in the case is absolute truth and justice—no more and no less.

The third grave charge against American morals is fixed upon the system of Slavery.

Let the charge be precisely stated. It is not that we

now import slaves, or suffer them to be imported. We have declared the trade to be piracy; and were the first nation in the world to do so. The charge is, that a body of the unfortunate African race formerly introduced into this country, and which has come by inheritance into the hands of the present generation, is still held in bondage. It is an involuntary possession. It was not sought by those in whom the title now vests; it is not desired by the most of them; it was entailed upon them. And the substantive matter of the accusation is, that they do not emancipate this class immediately. Gradual emancipation has been going on in this country from the moment that it was freed from its connection with Great Britain. Up to the time of the Abolition excitement, the discussion of such relief was freely entertained from one end of the country to the other. Let the reader remember the debates in the Virginia Legislature after the Southampton massacre, the language of Jefferson himself on this subject, and the conversations he must have held with the Southern planters, if he has taken any pains to converse with them. The charge is not, that the body of our citizens, even in the slave States, approve of this system in the abstract; not that they would now establish it; but that they permit its existence at all, that they do not break it up immediately; or with regard to the Northern States, it is that they are slumbering in criminal apathy over this tremendous evil and wrong. In one word, the charge is, that the national conscience is far behind that of other civilized countries. For it is not our present business to maintain that we are better than other nations, but to show that no grand demoralization has taken place under our Republican forms. This is what is now alleged in Europe, and this is what we deny.

We had prepared ourselves to make a somewhat full statement of our views of the entire Slavery question; but we refrain from doing so at present, for two reasons. The first is, that it would swell this essay beyond due bounds. And the second is, that we are unwilling, on reflection, to discuss the subject at large from the particular point of view at which we now stand. It places us in a false position with reference to our own sentiments. From some experience, we have found that everything we say, with a view to the defence of the national morality on this subject; is seen in a false light. We are looked upon as apologists for Slavery,—a thing we can never permit.

We must content ourselves at present, therefore, with some remarks on the state of feeling existing in this country, and the judgment formed of it abroad. Are we then to say, in the first place, that this feeling is altogether right, that the public conscience is elevated or quickened to the desirable point? It would be idle and foolish and immoral to say it. We suppose the people of this country, and especially the parties interested, feel very much as the people of England or France would, as all people will at first, in a case where immense interests are involved, where old habitudes and prejudices are called in question, and where selfish passions are aroused by earnest discussion. And here we must still desire the reader to observe our point of view, and not to misconstrue us. Absolutely speaking, we can have no wish but to raise the public character and conscience among us, to the highest elevation possible. In this view, it is nothing to us that other nations fail; we will spread no such shield over our errors. But when it is said, that our free institutions have depraved the national character, have made us a selfish and reckless people, have made us worse than any other people, it is to the purpose, and it is but justice to the great liberal cause, to deny the charge. We are willing that other nations should exact of us more than they demand of themselves, if they please; but when the exaction is brought into this kind of argument, we think it is unfair. We freely say, that we are not satisfied with the feeling that exists in this country with regard to the stupendous immorality of the slave-system, but we must equally deny that it indicates any extraordinary degeneracy.

But, in the next place, what is the feeling in fact? The Northern States have always been opposed to Slavery; they have manumitted all their slaves long ago; they are over-spread with Abolition Societies at this moment; and the writings of Channing and others have drawn universal attention and stirred the universal conscience. Does all this look like apathy? But then it is said, that many people at the North have been exasperated by the Abolition movement. But we ask,—could this be, because they are opposed to abolition? Why, they have abolished slavery themselves! The truth is, they thought this movement dangerous to the peace of the country, to the union of the States. And then they did not like the manner and tone of the Abolitionists. They could not help their dislike,

perhaps ; but they ought, we think, to have been more considerate than they were. They ought to have respected the pure and gentle, the courageous and self-sacrificing spirit of a man like Follen, and of others like him ; and we believe they did. But at any rate their dislike of the Abolitionists was not a hostility to abolition. The hopeful idea has always been entertained in New England, that the emancipation of which itself had set the example, would gradually spread itself over the South, till not one human creature in these States should be held in bondage. Then again, with regard to the feeling entertained at the South, we must believe that much injustice has been done to it. There are those, it is true, who defend the slave-system in its very principle, and maintain that it ought to be permanent. But we believe they are few. Many of the planters, we know, feel their situation to be a painful and irksome one, and would gladly be rid of it. But what should they have done ? They saw, as they aver, that manumission, with them, did the coloured man no good ; that he was a worse man, and worse off, for his freedom. They felt, too, that their characters were assailed with rude and cruel severity, and they were naturally indignant. This was set down, at once, to Southern pride and selfishness and inhumanity ; but was it just ? We have known the Southern people, as generous and hospitable and kind-hearted and courteous to a proverb ; no people in the world more so ; was it right to heap upon them unmeasured opprobrium and indignity, instead of approaching them as brethren, with kind and respectful reasoning ; instead of mildly asking them what ought to be, and what could be done ?

And indeed, what is to be done ? This we say, in the third place, is the great question ; and it is a difficult question ; it is environed with difficulties. The way out of these difficulties is not so plain that a good conscience must needs see it at once and feel no hesitation. The example of West India emancipation has indeed relieved some doubts. The docility, the gratitude, the joy of the coloured people there, and their willingness quietly to enter into new social relations, to work as freemen upon the fields which they had tilled as slaves, presented a beautiful and touching spectacle ; and we rejoice at it ; we thank God for it. But yet, is West India emancipation an example for us ? The coloured race, with us, must ever be a small and depressed minority. They can never be the

dominant class, as in the West Indies. Scattered among us, and yet separated from us by impassable physical, if not mental barriers; refused intermarriage, refused intercourse as equals, be it ever so unjustly; how are they ever to rise? How are they to enjoy any fair chance as men? We are disposed to ask for them an ampler measure of relief than mere emancipation. And yet how they are to get it, except in entire removal from the country, we see not. Force, for this purpose, is out of the question; but we have thought that, if, being emancipated, they should see it to be for their advantage to retire to Hayti or the West Indies, it would be fortunate for them; it would be the only situation in which they could rise to their proper place as men. And we *have* doubted whether emancipation in this country, either at the North or South, has done them any good. The instances that have fallen under our particular and personal observation go to prove the contrary. We have known communities of them, where fifty years of freedom have left them worse and worse off for it. We do not say that they were less happy; for we think that freedom is a boon that may compensate for the loss of almost everything beside. At the same time we hear that there are far more favourable instances than those we have examined. We are told, that in the cities of New York and Philadelphia there are communities of regular, orderly and industrious coloured people, who have their churches, their schools, their charitable institutions, and among whom are far fewer poor and wretched than among the Irish emigrants. They are said to have improved very much within the last ten years. Something of this we have suspected; and it has occurred to us that the demonstration of friendship given in the visible array of the Abolition movement, may have been of great service to them.

The question before us, we say, is one of momentous concern, and fraught with difficulty and danger. It were a comparatively easy thing to vote twenty millions, or a hundred millions, to free slaves in a distant island. And we verily believe that our difficulties would be less, if *all* the States were slave States. Then we should have one common interest. Then we might go together. Now there is a perilous altercation between the North and the South. To our apprehension it endangers the Union. Foreigners can feel little concern about it, compared with what we feel: and they may use a rough and violent language on this subject, which it would not be our wisdom to imitate.

On the whole, we think it must be apparent that this is a subject to be treated with the utmost care and consideration, with the utmost Christian seriousness and moderation. We are accused abroad of a base and criminal apathy upon it. Who of us may deserve this charge we know not, but we do know many who have stood aloof from the Abolition movement, in application to whom it would be utterly and cruelly false. From our youth up, we have known the fact to be far otherwise. Twenty-five years ago—long before any Abolition Society was heard of—we knew of a private Association of gentlemen formed for the investigation of this subject.* Often and often have we known this matter to be discussed, as the most fatal evil and peril of the country; discussed at the North with solemn deliberation, and at the South with anxieties and tears even, which should have won a consideration far different from this coarse and ferocious abuse.

It has been proclaimed abroad that our pulpit dares not speak out on this subject; that many of our clergy are Abolitionists, but have not the courage to confess it. We repel the charge with indignation. Our clergy generally, though of course opposed to Slavery, are *not* Abolitionists. Nay, and we have discussed the subject of Slavery less frequently than we otherwise might have done, because we saw, or thought we saw, that the discussion was taking a dangerous turn. Foreigners can strike in freely among us; the blow does not hurt them; they care little for our dissensions and our perils; but *we*, with their leave, must look a little more carefully after these matters. It is always found that one's neighbours can speak much more freely of his family than he can himself. They understand but little of the difficulty and delicacy of his situation. We say plainly, that we do not like the tone of *English* criticism upon us.† We have seen more than one rough and reckless comment

* The writer of this essay was a member of this Association.

† We do not descend so low in this allusion as to a late article, run mad with the rage for abuse, in the last London *Foreign Quarterly Review*. Nor do we refer now to its criticism on our poets. But the first few pages contain an attack upon this country of such unmeasured injustice, that we can find no words wherewith adequately to speak of it. We are sometimes tempted to ask, *is there something coarse and brutal in the English civilization?* But we check ourselves. We have seen the homes of England, and never and nowhere on earth do we expect to find more refinement, courtesy, and hospitality than we have seen there. And we trust the higher mind of that country to rebuke, as they deserve, such insane ebullitions, when occupying any loftier place than the vilest newspaper, or the lowest gin-shop.

upon our soberest writers on politics, like Channing and Story. They are considered as timid and time-serving. We recollect that in one of the leading Reviews, Channing was represented—the high-hearted and intrepid Channing—as “bowing and kissing hands to the public all round!” Nay, even on the subject of Slavery, he was too prudent for some. The celebrated John Foster said, when reading one of his powerful Essays, “it is very fine, but rather too much like a razor.” *He* wanted that the American champion should strike with a club. The fact is, people abroad look with a sort of speculative and curious feeling upon our discussions. They like to see the Democratic principle, as they consider it, carried out to the fullest extent, as it is in the former writings of Brownson, and of others, young and rash as he was. That pleases them, amuses them. But we have something else to do in this country, besides pleasing or amusing anybody. We must be sober, if we would be wise men. We have many things to consider, that are out of the reach of trans-Atlantic eyes. We have many interests to take into the account, many powers and tendencies to hold in a careful balance. God forbid that we should set anything above the sovereign, solemn, eternal truth! But beneath that truth we must walk reverently, soberly, humbly.

We have now considered the three heaviest charges that are brought against our national morality; repudiation, the spirit of gain, and slavery. We might proceed to say something, if we had space, of certain disorders, private broils and violations of law, under the name of Lynch Law, which characterize the state of society in the far West. There is a certain border-land between civilization and barbarism, where personal vindication, and lawless defence of society against thieves and gamblers, sometimes take place of the regular administration of public justice. We have no defence whatever to make of these usages. We have only to say, that they are less remarkable and portentous than they appear to European eyes; especially when it is considered that these are continually exhibited in newspaper paragraphs, instead of the general order of society which prevails in that part of the country. But the important observation to be made is, that this border-land is constantly retreating before the advances of settled law and order. If it were otherwise, if this border were coming Eastward, if Lynch Law and the bowie knife were gaining

upon us, it were an invasion to be looked upon with unmitigated horror. But the truth is, that they are constantly driven back and are fast retreating to "their own place," the wild domain of savage life.

After all, we are not sure but the great offence of this country lies in what is *called* "a Democratic levelling of all distinctions," and in what is represented as "a consequent general vulgarity of mind and manners." Strangely enough Mr. Dickens has especially taken it to heart, to make this impression upon the people of England and upon his readers all over Europe. We do not say that he was obliged to think well of us, because we thought well of him and received him kindly. He had delighted the people of this country with his pictures of life and manners; he had provided them with what, amidst their too serious and engrossing cares, they very much wanted—a great deal of harmless amusement; he had won them by the broad and beautiful seal of humanity that is set upon his genius; and they paid him a homage which no other *people* on earth could pay. It was really a most extraordinary demonstration, creditable to both parties, indicative of great intellectual power on the one side, and of no mean share of intelligence on the other: and out of this bare fact of Mr. Dickens's reception, doing him more justice than he does himself, we could frame an argument good against more than half he says of America. We confess, under all the circumstances of the case, that we were never more at loss to account for any state of mind than for this bitterness towards America, of the popular novelist. It will not do for him to say that he is a fiction writer and somewhat of a caricaturist. When he draws pictures of disgusting meanness and vulgarity at home, he lets the reader plainly understand that they belong to the lowest life in England. But he presents to the English and European public, pictures of a vulgarity which nobody ever saw, or heard or conceived of in America, and when they walk out of the frame, lo! they are merchants of New York, Generals and landed proprietors in the West, persons holding respectable positions in society. This is no play of fiction. Speaking in his own person, he permits himself, amidst a strain of almost insane vituperation, to use language like this concerning America: "That Republic," he says, "but yesterday let loose upon her noble course, and but to-day so maimed and lame, so full

of sores and ulcers, foul to the eye and almost hopeless (?) to the sense, that her best friends turn from the loathsome creature with disgust!!” We grieve to say, that the disgust inspired by this passage must turn, we fear, upon the writer of it. Mr. Dickens might be reminded that there are other vehicles for scurrility, as it would seem, besides newspapers. We challenge him to find in the lowest of our public prints any language concerning any civilized people on earth, to compare with the passage we have just quoted. Can it be a respectable thing in England, to treat a nation with such indignity as this? We believe not. The angry novelist, as we have reason to know, is doing himself more hurt at home, even than abroad.

But there is nevertheless a state of opinion in England to which this general representation addresses itself. It is doubtless believed by many that the people in this country are, in the mass, a knavish, mean and vulgar people; that we are a people of infinite pretension and very little performance; that our intelligence is cunning, our virtue wordy talk, and our religion fanaticism; in short, that our Democratic institutions are fast breaking down all reverence, nobleness, and true culture among our people. From the high places of society in England, they cast down scorn upon this poor Republic, wallowing in the mire and filth of boundless license and vulgarity! *

We are somewhat tempted to take that bull, John Bull, by the horns in this matter, though we should be gored by him. Nobility against Democracy then—be it so. We are ready to maintain that Democracy is yielding nobler results. We will not direct attention to the misery of the lower classes in that country; but we point directly to the higher classes. We say that much of that misery is owing to *them*. We say that they do not now, and that they never did, their duty to the people of England. We say that they have never made any contribution, proportionable to their advantages, to the wealth, improvement, learning, literature, or even to the statesmanship of England. Were not their ranks continually recruited from the commonalty, they would have more than half died and ceased out of the land by this time. Their position is essentially a false and wrong position for human beings to occupy. Nay, their feeble hands cannot hold the very property that is committed to them. Were it not lashed on to them by

* See Lord Sydenham's Letter.

entail, it would be scattered during the life-time of the present generation. At this very moment, more than half of the great landed estates of England are under mortgage.

We say moreover, that their position is one totally unjust and infinitely ungenerous to the rest of the people. They have a most unfair start in the race of life. There is no generous boy in any country that would not disdain such an advantage. Suppose that such a boy were sent to any public school; and that the master, patting him on the head, should say to him, "I know where you came from, my dear; you are the son of such or such an one; now do not trouble yourself about the tasks, my boy; though you do not work half so hard as the others, you shall have more marks than any of them; and when you run races with them, you shall always have two rods the start; so you shall be a grand boy in the school any way." Now what would any spirited and generous boy say of this? With bursting tears of indignation, we should expect him to say, "I do not want to be treated so; I do not want any advantage; let me take my chance with the rest." The peerage is the great baby-nursery of England; and all the land is taxed and tasked to keep it warm and comfortable—especially for the oldest boy: and when the younger ones run out, instantly coats and cloaks—to wit, army and navy uniforms, cassocks, good secretaryships, appointments—are provided for them by the kind and nursing public.

The good people of England especially admire this institution, and it is our especial marvel that they do. We cannot help thinking that many a noble lord laughs in his sleeve at it. Our own feeling is, that the people in that country are not elevated, but degraded by this worship of the aristocracy. We remember once asking in a company of intelligent and cultivated persons in England, whether there was anybody, any man in the country, who on being invited by the Lord of a neighbouring castle to visit him and spend a week in hunting with his Lordship, would not feel—and that too whether his Lordship was wise or simple, bad or good—would not feel, we say, sensibly gratified and very highly honoured. With a shout of laughter at our simplicity, they all answered, "No, there is no such man in England!"

Give us then, we say, the chance for the noblest deve-

lopment of all human faculties and affections, that is found in our generous freedom, with all its faults, rather than that which is offered in the title-worshipping land of Britain !

In connection with our morality, we wish to say a word or two, in passing, of our religion. There is a total misconception in Europe on this subject. We have no established Church and no ecclesiastical revenue, and it is inferred that we have no religion. Dr. Chalmers, some years ago, came out in London with a series of lectures on the Voluntary System, and much did he delight the members of the Establishment by proving, as they supposed, that religion cannot be left to take care of itself; that it is not in this, as in worldly matters, that demand will procure supply. We should like to know what he thinks of it now, since one of the noblest voluntary contributions has been made that ever the world saw, to support him and the free churches of his new communion in breaking off from the Establishment. Be this as it may; here in America, is a perfect illustration of the permanent working of the voluntary principle. Here is a country without either establishment or endowment or revenue, or compulsion of any sort to support religion. And what do we see? More Divinity Schools are established here, more churches are builded, and larger salaries, to *the body* of the clergy, are paid in this country, than anywhere else in the world. Demand will not procure supply—the voluntary principle will not sustain religious institutions—is it said? Look at the churches that are rising around us in every city in the Union—and not one stone laid in their foundations, but what the voluntary principle lays there. But this zeal is not confined to our cities. We took a journey three or four years since, across the hills of our own and a neighbouring county in Massachusetts, and we must confess that we were equally surprised and delighted with what we saw. In the first township that we came to, they were building a new church, for the convenience of a half-parish two or three miles from the old church. In the second, they were painting their church, and had replaced the old steeple with a new one. We shall be permitted to be thus minute, because these are the simple facts. In a third township—all lying adjacent to each other—they had pulled down the old church, and built a new, commodious and tasteful structure in its stead. In a fourth, not far distant, we came out upon what seemed a church in the

wilderness ; all surrounded by woods, with not a dwelling-house in sight. One other building there was, indeed, hard by it, and that was a new academy—with a bell that was ringing out its matin call to the pupils, and sounded like a convent bell amidst the solitudes of the Alps. Now, let a man travel over England, and where can he find anything like this ? Dr. Chalmers asks for a power that shall build churches and support their ministers. We point him to the voluntary principle. It does build churches here, and it does pay the clergy ; and it does everything else that we want done. At least it accomplishes more than is done in any other country. England with all her ecclesiastical revenues, and all the power of her hierarchy, and all the wealth of her nobles, cannot build churches nor raise funds in her waste places, nay, nor in her thronged cities, to any such extent as is done here, simply by the voluntary principle.

Passing from our morals and religion, we would say something, in the next place, of our manners. And we freely admit the high significance of this consideration. Manners really are, according to the old usages of language, matters of morality. Manners are the instant unfolding, out-flowing of a people's mind ; they are unpremeditated expressions of culture or coarseness, refinement or vulgarity, self-considering or self-forgetting, justice or injustice, kindness or coldness of heart ; they are as significant as charities or churches, as bankruptcies or battles. Show us a people whose manners are essentially bad—gross, coarse, ungentle and bad ; and we should give up the defence of it in as utter despair, as if it had neither priests nor altars, neither hospitals nor alms-houses.

We hope to show by some simple discriminations, that we have no cause so to despair of ourselves as a people ; whatever may be said by foreign tourists who scan our manners in a month, or study our domestic usages in a steamboat. And we offer one of these discriminations, by saying in the first place, that there are certain things, not attaching to us as a people, and yet found among us, which we freely give up to "the whips and scorns" of whosoever pleases to lay upon them the lash and the sting.

The manners, for instance, of some of the members of our legislative assemblies—and must we say ? of the highest—we give up ; we have not a word to say in defence or extenuation. This only will we say, that if there be men

who have found their way into the legislature, rather than the wrestling-ring or the cock-pit—if there be such men who have given the lie, or lifted the hand and struck the vulgar blow, in the majestic halls of public debate—if there be such men who are not made to feel the weight of that dishonour so long as they live,—we do not know, and we do not wish to know, the people and the public sentiment of this country. Ah! if they could understand with what bitter and insupportable shame, every American, in every land, hangs his head when these things are mentioned, they might pardon something of the indignation with which we write. We would that our countrymen might be aroused to consider this matter most seriously; and that when such a man presents himself before them for re-election, they would say to him, “No, sir; we are seeking a statesman, not a pugilist.”

Again; the character of the newspaper press has been made the matter of heavy reproaches against us. It has been made the subject of elaborate articles in the foreign journals. We must think there has been some injustice, some want of discrimination in the case. From the innumerable columns of the daily press, written in haste and weariness often, it might be expected that many objectionable passages could be selected, and when these are spread out side by side, it is easy to see that a false impression may be created. But still no observing and thoughtful man among us can help admitting, unless he be restrained by the sheerest cowardice, that the character of our newspapers deserves much of the reproach that is cast upon it. Many of their editors, we believe, see and feel this as much as others. We have heard more than one of them admit, that even the vexatious prosecutions for libel by one of our distinguished authors have done good. If nothing of this sort were admitted, if the press stood up in its own defence, we should like to see it tried by its own testimony. Look at the party prints, for instance. What unprincipled, nefarious, outrageous, lying prints are they all, by the judgment of their opponents! But we are afraid we must press this evidence a little farther; into the barriers of the same party. Look at the rival prints of our cities. Within any period of a year or two, we know of one city at least, in which not one of them, nor one of their editors, escapes the charge of being malignant, base, indecent, and reckless of all truth and principle. If this were bad taste only, it

were bad enough; but certainly it is something much worse. The truth is, printing has become almost as common as talking; and we have in it, therefore, almost all the freedom of talk, without the restraints of personal presence. It is, in some sort, like an anonymous letter; always the most reckless and abusive of all writing, because of the veil that covers the attack. In short, we have come to a new era in printing. Newspaper freedom never before tried any people to the same extent; the peril of it has come upon us unsuspected; we have fallen into the mistakes incident to a new and untried state of things, and we must look to the teachings of experience and to the corrective power of public sentiment, as they have helped us always and everywhere, to help us here.

Much good satire has been expended upon a minor immorality of our manners, in defence of which we have nothing to say but this,—that we never saw the transgression. What may be done in bar-rooms, in steamboats and railroad cars, we say not—we need not describe nor defend it; these places are out-of-doors to many people. But speaking of what passes in-doors, and from thirty or forty years' observation of this country, and from a pretty wide circle of intercourse, we say, taxing our memory to the utmost, that we never saw any person spit on a carpet or parlour-floor in America. Wherever the fault lies, there let the reprobation fall; but to multitudes among us, this representation of foreign tourists, as a general one, must be a matter of as unmixed surprise, as if they had said, that we keep bears in our parlours, or settle our fire-side discussions with fisticuffs.

With regard to our manners on the whole, while there is, doubtless, less of ease and polish than in the higher circles of Europe, where men live in and for society almost entirely, and less of a certain civility and kindness than in the humbler classes abroad, educated for ages to deference and respect; yet there is a self-respect among our people, and a delicacy and consideration of different classes in the treatment of one another, and a freedom from mannerism, from hackneyed and heartless forms—the devices of modern etiquette or the stereotypes of old precision—all of which we value, and value as the results of our better and juster political condition. Manners are the mirror of a people's mind. And we believe that each class in this country, as compared with its respective class abroad, will be found,

from its relative position, to have manners more manly and sincere, and more just, as between man and man; the higher less assumption, the lower less sycophancy, and the middling classes decidedly more cultivation.

We are far from anxious, however, to defend our manners in all points. We think it easy to see that causes are at work, which for a time must have an unfavourable influence in this respect, while in the long run they are to elevate the character, and ultimately, indeed, the very manners of the people. The ease of the nation, perhaps, may be illustrated by that of an individual. Compare a humble citizen of this country, rising into life and having nothing but his good heart and hand to help him, with the man of a similar class in Europe. There, he is a labourer, always to depend for work and life, for the very soil on which he labours, upon others; a serf in Russia, a poor tenant in England. He is humble, civil, obsequious, quiet; he bears in his whole manner and being the stamp of an inferiority, from which he never hopes to escape; his very dress marks him out as a member of that class; he never aspires to rise above it; he reads little, perhaps he cannot read at all; he thinks little; his ideas revolve in a narrow circle; he agitates no questions of social prudence with his superiors; he scarcely feels himself to be a man in their presence, and in the sense in which they are men; he expects to die as he has lived, and his children are to live as he died; in fine, he is an orderly, decent, useful person, and from the high places of society they look down upon him with complacency, for with them he is never to come into competition. Now look at the humble man of America. He is a backwoods-man, if you please. He owns the soil he treads upon; he pays neither rent, nor tithes, nor taxes, but by his own consent and that of his peers. He acknowledges no master; he bows to no lord nor land-holder. All this may have an effect, and, for a time, a bad effect, upon his manners. He is free, fearless, uncourteous, reckless, perhaps, in his bearing; he seems almost lawless: the experiment looks not well. The traveller from another country, accustomed to homage from this class, looks upon him with displeasure, perhaps with disgust. He speaks his mind too freely, he does not take off his hat with sufficient deference. Something rough and unamiable there is, perhaps, in his manner. He has not learned to vindicate himself in the right way. That

which is struggling in his bosom, is not to be softened and humanized in a moment. O nature ! poor human nature ! —through errors and sorrows must thou work out thy welfare ; and the thoughtful and considerate must wait for thee a little. Wait then, we say, and look a little farther. Does not this man become in time a far more intelligent being than his fellow in Europe ; with a wider range of thought and culture ? Is he not more hopeful and strong-hearted ? Does he not strike his spade into the soil that is his own, with a more willing energy and a more cheerful hope ? Does not the light from the opening sky of his fortunes break clearer and stronger, into the cloud of strife and passion ? Yes, he rises. He rises in character, in culture, in dignity and influence. He takes a place in society as hopeless to his brother in the Old World as the possession of fiefs and earldoms. His children after him rise to the highest places in the land.

This is a picture of the man in this country. This, in some sort, is a picture of the country. Is there a man on earth, with a human heart in his bosom, that does not rejoice in the spectacle ; that does not sympathize with the experiment ; that does not say, God speed it ? No, there is no *man*. But there are—and they are not a few—distorted from the shape and nobleness of men, who hate the experiment, and wish it nothing but ill. Clothed in the robes of selfish grandeur, they would as soon think of taking their dogs into an equality with themselves, as of taking the mass of mankind. With this spirit is our quarrel. With this spirit is the quarrel of this country. And by all the hope of Christianity and faith in God, do we trust and believe that this country shall vindicate the great cause which is committed to it.

Yes, humanity — not knighthood nor nobility — the great, wide humanity, has its first, perhaps its last, fair, free chance here. Sighing and broken through ages, it wandered to this new world. It struck the virgin soil, and forth, from the great heart of the land, burst the word FREEDOM ! The waters of a thousand spreading bays and shores heard it. The winds took it up, and bore it over the wide sea. It smote the sceptre of injustice and oppression. It shook the thrones of the world. This is no mere figure : it is true. There is nothing which all the crowned tyrannies of the world fear and hate, like the example of America. We say not, the *crowns* of the world. We

have no hostility to royalty as such. We have no hostility to it, if it can possibly be reconciled with a just and temperate freedom : and we see no necessary incompatibility between the two. But all the injustice that reigns, all the tyranny, all the oppression that *reigns* in the world, has its practical controversy now, with the example of America. If we can stand, they must fall. This is the great controversy : and may God defend the right !

Would that it were possible to impress upon the people of this country, a sense of their responsibility to God and men—to the world and to the hopes of future ages. We have humbly attempted to defend our cause against the misgivings of the timid at home, and the mistakes of those who assail us from abroad. The fact is, they do not know this country. We perhaps ought to know better ; and yet we, the most of us, have had no opportunity for comparing it with others. We have never seen an American traveller, who in a just and manly spirit has really looked into the state of things in Europe, that did not bless, on his return, the land of his birth. But *they*, we repeat, do not know us. They have no idea of our fortunate condition. They have no idea of the freehold farms, the neat and thriving villages, and the happy and improving communities that are spread all over this land. They do not know the spirit of this country. And yet we wonder that they do not observe, that almost all the great moral and humane reforms of the age have proceeded from it ; Popular Education, the Temperance Reform, the Prison Discipline Reform, the kinder treatment in Asylums for the Insane, the Ministry for the Poor in Cities, and the Peace Society. Can the country be so morally bad, out of which such things have sprung ?

But it is time that we should draw to a close. There has been one great example of Republican Government in ancient times, and it failed. We have stood upon its mournful ruins ; and when asked there, what most impressed us in Rome, we answered,—“ To stand still and think that this is Rome ! ” To stand indeed upon the Janiculum or upon the Gardens of Sallust, and east your eye around you ; to think of the stupendous histories that have made their theatre within the range of your vision ; to think what has passed *there*,—there where that momentary glance of your eye falls,—is to submit your mind to a more awful meditation than pertains to any other spot of

earth, with one only exception. But those hills upon which has been enthroned the grandeur of successive Empires—what is written upon their now desolate seats? What is the lesson taught to the world by the sublimest history in the world? No historian, we doubt, has answered this question; for the philosophy of history is yet to be written.

But, one question there is above all, which presses itself upon the American traveller, as he gazes upon that theatre of the old Roman story, and that is,—Are we, who have set the great modern example of Republican freedom, to be discouraged by the failure of that ancient experiment? Does the awful shadow of the past, that for ever lingers amidst those majestic ruins, point to the grand experiment that is passing on these shores, and say, “It is all in vain!”—to the labours of our statesmen and sages, and say, “They are all in vain!”—to the blood that has stained our hills and waters, and say, “It has been spilt in vain!” This is the great question that issues from that sepulchre of Roman grandeur—shall America fail?

God forbid! She must not, she will not fail. Christianity is here. Educated man is here. Vigour and hope, promise and prayer are here. Heaven, that spreads its fair sky over a fertile land, is with us. May it breathe its blessing into our people’s heart, rich as our teeming earth; fresh and bright as the light and breezes of our sky!

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